This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

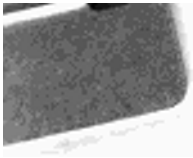
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 06731581 6



THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR, LENOX
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

Voltaire
NKE G
699

Lewis ye 15th King of France stab'd by Dam

4325

THE WORKS OF VOLTAIRE.

VOL. XXV.

Being VOL. VI. of his

DRAMATIC WORKS.

21

To the PUBLIC.

By the Indiſpoſition of the Engraver, the Frontiſpiece to this Volume could not be finiſhed in Time; it will therefore be given the Firſt of April, with the Frontiſpiece to the next Volume.

THE

DRAMATIC WORKS

OF

Mr. DE VOLTAIRE.

Tranſlated by the Rev. Mr. FRANCKLIN.

VOL. VI.

LONDON:

Printed for J. NEWBERY, R. BALDWIN, S. CROWDER, and Co. J. COOTE, T. DAVIES, W. JOHNSTON, R. FRANCKLIN, and G. KEARSLEY.

M.DCC.LXIII.

TO NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

This VOLUME contains

An ADVERTISEMENT from the EDITOR.
A LETTER to his Majesty the King of PRUSSIA.
A LETTER from Mr. VOLTAIRE to Pope BENEDICT XIV.
The ANSWER of Pope BENEDICT XIV. to Mr. VOLTAIRE.
A LETTER of THANKS from Mr. VOLTAIRE to the POPE.
MAHOMET. A Tragedy.
PREFACE to SOCRATES.
SOCRATES. A Dramatic Performance.
A LETTER to the Marchioness of CHASTELLET.
PREFACE to ALZIRA.
ALZIRA. A Tragedy.

ADVERTISEMENT

FROM THE

EDITOR.

THE litterary world will perhaps think themſelves oblig'd to me for publiſhing the tragedy of *Mahomet*, which had been barbarouſly mangled in two ſurreptitious editions. I can venture to aſſure the reader, that it was written in 1736, and a copy of it then ſent by the author to the *Prince Royal*, now *King of Pruſſia*, who at that time cultivated the *Belles-Lettres* with aſtoniſhing ſucceſs, and continues to make them his principal amuſement.

I was at *Liſle* in 1741, where Mr. *de Voltaire* came to paſs a few days: there was then the beſt company of actors in the town that had ever been in *Provence*, who repreſented this piece highly to the ſatisfaction of a very numerous audience. The governor and the intendant were ſeveral times preſent at the performance. A tragedy written in ſo new a taſte, and on ſo delicate a ſubject, treated with ſuch judgment and diſcretion, in-

duc'd many prelates to have it acted in a private houſe by the ſame perſons. Their opinion confirm'd that of the public. The author was at the ſame time ſo happy as to get his manuſcript preſented to * one of the firſt men in the church, and indeed in all Europe, who ſupported the weight of public affairs with firmneſs, and judg'd concerning works of genius with true taſte, at an age when few men have, and ſtill fewer preſerve their wit and delicacy. He pronounc'd that the piece was written with all proper decorum and circumſpection, and that it was impoſſible to handle with more prudence ſo dangerous a ſubject; but that with regard to the poetry, there were many things in it that wanted correction: theſe the author, to my knowledge, afterwards retouch'd with the greateſt care. This was likewiſe the opinion of another eminent perſonage of equal rank, and of equal abilities.

At length this excellent performance, which had been licens'd according to form in many other places, was exhibited at *Paris* on the ninth of *Auguſt*, 1742: a whole box was fill'd with the principal magiſtrates of the city: the miniſters were alſo preſent, and all were of the ſame opinion with the excellent judges above-

* Cardinal Fleury.

mention'd.

mention'd. There were however ſome perſons at the firſt repreſentation who diſapprov'd of it: whether it was that in the hurry of the action they did not ſufficiently attend to the gradual proceſs of it, or that they were little vers'd in ſtage matters, * they ſeem'd ſhock'd at *Mahomet*'s ordering a man to commit murther, and making uſe of his religion to ſtir up an innocent youth, the inſtrument of his crimes, to an aſſaſſination. Theſe gentlemen, ſtruck with the horror of the action, did not ſufficiently conſider, that this murther is repreſented in the tragedy as the moſt atrocious of all crimes, and that indeed it was morally impoſſible it ſhou'd be otherwiſe! the truth was, they ſaw indeed but one ſide, the uſual method which men take to deceive themſelves. And as they conſider'd that ſide only, it was no wonder they ſhou'd take offence, which a little more attention wou'd eaſily have remov'd: but in the firſt heat of their zeal they cry'd out, it was a dangerous performance, and fit only to produce *Ravaillacs* and *Jacques Clements*. A moſt

* The true ſtate of the caſe was that the Abbé *des Fontaines* and ſome others as malicious as himſelf, decry'd the tragedy of Mahomet, as a wicked and ſcandalous performance: the affair made ſo much noiſe, that the prime miniſter, Cardinal Fleury, who had long before read and approv'd of it, was notwithſtanding oblig'd to adviſe the author to withdraw it.

extraordinary piece of criticiſm which theſe gentlemen no doubt are by this time heartily aſham'd of. This wou'd in effect be to affirm, that HERMIONE teaches us to aſſaſſinate kings, ELECTRA to kill our mothers, CLEOPATRA and MEDEA to ſlay our own children: that HARPAGON makes miſers, the GAMESTER gameſters, and *Tartuffe* hypocrites. The cenſure of *Mahomet* wou'd carry with it even more injuſtice than this, becauſe the iniquity of that falſe prophet is repreſented in a light more odious and deteſtable than any of the vices or follies ſatyris'd in thoſe performances. The tragedy was written directly in oppoſition to the *Ravaillacs* and *Jacque Clements*, in ſo much that, as a perſon of excellent judgment lately obſerv'd, if *Mahomet* had been written in the time of *Henry* III. and *Henry* IV. it might have ſav'd both their lives. Wou'd one think it poſſible that the author of the HENRIADE would ever have met with ſuch a reproach, he who has ſo often in that poem, and in other parts of his works, lifted up his voice, not only againſt ſuch crimes, but againſt all thoſe pernicious maxims which are the cauſes of them? The more I read that writer's works, the more have I always found the love of public good their diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic: every part of them

inſpires

inſpires horror and deteſtation of rebellion, perſecution, and fanaticiſm.

Is there a good and worthy citizen who wou'd not adopt all the maxims of the *Henriade*? Does not that poem inſpire us with the love of virtue? *Mahomet* appears to me to be written in the ſame ſpirit, and this I am perſuaded the author's greateſt enemies will frankly acknowledge.

He ſoon perceiv'd that a formidable party was rais'd againſt him: ſome of the moſt violent amongſt them had got the ear of a few great men, who not having ſeen the piece themſelves, believ'd every thing that theſe gentlemen thought proper to report concerning it. The celebrated *Moliere*, the glory of *France*, was once in nearly the ſame condition, when his *Tartuffe* was firſt exhibited: he had immediate recourſe to *Lewis the great*, who knew and lov'd him. The authority of that monarch ſoon put an end to the ſiniſter and malevolent miſrepreſentations of *Tartuffe*: but times are chang'd: that protection which is given to arts in their infant ſtate, cannot be expected to continue after thoſe arts have been cultivated for a length of time: beſides that one man may not have intereſt to obtain that which another had procur'd with eaſe: ſome inſtruments muſt be ſet to work, ſome diſcuſſions made,

ſome new examinations paſs'd through, before any thing can be done in his favor. The author therefore thought it moſt adviſeable to withdraw his piece, after the third repreſentation, in hopes that time wou'd get the better of prejudice, which muſt inevitably * happen amongſt a people ſo ſenſible and judicious as our own. It was put in the public papers, that the tragedy of *Mahomet* had been ſtopp'd by order of the government, which was an abſolute falſehood: no ſuch order was ever given; and the firſt men in the kingdom, who had ſeen this tragedy, unanimouſly concurr'd in their admiration of it. Some perſons having haſtily tranſcrib'd a few ſcenes from the actors parts, two or three imperfect editions crept into the world: it is eaſy to ſee how much they differ from the true work which I have here given. Prefix'd to this tragedy are ſeveral intereſting pieces; one of the moſt curious amongſt them, in my opinion, is a letter written by the author to his majeſty the *king of Pruſſia*, on his return through *Holland*, after a viſit to him. In papers of this kind,

* What the editor foreſaw in 1741 did actually come to paſs in 1751, when this tragedy was repreſented with univerſal applauſe. Cabal and perſecution gave way to the voice of the public, and perhaps the more readily as many by this time began to feel ſome remorſe at having forc'd a man to quit his country, who had labour'd ſo ſucceſsfully for the honour of it.

which

which were not originally design'd for the public, one ſees the real ſentiments of men: I flatter myſelf they will afford the ſame pleaſure to every true philoſopher which they gave me in the peruſal.

To his MAJESTY
The KING of PRUSSIA.

SIR, *Rotterdam, January* 20, 1742.

I AM at preſent, like the pilgrims of *Mecca*, turning their eyes perpetually towards that city after leaving it, as I do mine towards the court of *Pruſſia*. My heart, deeply penetrated with the ſenſe of your majeſty's goodneſs, knows no grief but that which ariſes from my incapacity of being always with you. I have taken the liberty to ſend your majeſty a freſh copy of *Mahomet*, the ſketch of which you have ſeen ſome time ago. This is a tribute which I pay to the lover of arts, the ſenſible critic, and above all, to the philoſopher much more than to the ſovereign. Your majeſty knows by what motive I was inſpir'd in the compoſition of that work. The love of mankind, and the hatred of fanaticiſm, two virtues that adorn your throne, guided my pen: I have ever been of opinion,

that tragedy ſhou'd correct, as well as move the heart. Of what conſequence or importance to mankind are the paſſions or misfortunes of any of the heroes of antiquity, if they do not convey ſome inſtruction to us? It is univerſally acknowledg'd, that the comedy of *Tartuffe*, a piece hitherto unequall'd, did a great deal of good in the world, by ſhewing hypocriſy in its proper light; and why therefore ſhou'd we not endeavour in a tragedy to expoſe that ſpecies of impoſture which ſets to work the hyprocriſy of ſome, and the madneſs of others? Why may we not go back to the hiſtories of thoſe antient ruffians, the illuſtrious founders of ſuperſtition and fanaticiſm, who firſt carry'd the ſword to the altar to ſacrifice all thoſe who refus'd to embrace their doctrines?

They who tell us that theſe days of wickedneſs are paſt, that we ſhall never ſee any more *Barcochebas*, *Mahomets*, *John* of *Leyden's*, &c. And that the flames of religious war are totally extinguiſh'd, in my opinion, pay too high a compliment to human nature. The ſame poiſon ſtill ſubſiſts, though it does not appear ſo openly, ſome ſymptoms of this plague break out from time to time enough to infect the earth: have not we in our own age ſeen the prophets of *Cevennes* killing

in

in the name of God thoſe of their ſect, who were not ſufficiently pliant to their purpoſes?

The action I have deſcrib'd is terrible; I don't know whether horror was ever carry'd farther on any ſtage. A young man born with virtuous inclinations, ſeduc'd by fanaticiſm, aſſaſſinates an old man who loves him; and whilſt he imagines he is ſerving God, is, without knowing it, guilty of parricide: the murther is committed by the order of an impoſtor, who promiſes him a reward, which proves to be inceſt. This, I acknowledge, is full of horror; but your majeſty is throughly ſenſible, that tragedy ſhou'd not conſiſt merely of love, jealouſy, and marriage: even our hiſtorians abound in actions much more horrible than that which I have invented. *Seid* does not know that the perſon whom he aſſaſſinates is his father, and when he has committed the crime, feels the deepeſt remorſe for it; but *Mezeray* tells us, that at *Milan* a father kill'd his ſon with his own hand on account of religion, and was not in the leaſt ſorry for it. The ſtory of the two brothers *Diaz* is well known; one of them was at *Rome* and the other at *Allemagne*, in the beginning of the commotions rais'd by *Luther*: *Bartholomew Diaz*, hearing that his brother embrac'd the opinion of *Luther* at *Francfort*, left Rome on purpoſe to aſſaſſinate him,

and accordingly did so. *Herrera*, a *Spanish* author, tells us, that *Bartholomew Diaz was a great hazard in doing this, but nothing intimidated a man of honour guided by honesty.* *Herrera*, we see, brought up in that holy religion, which is an enemy to cruelty, a religion which teaches long-suffering and not revenge, was perſuaded that honeſty might make a man an aſſaſſin and a parricide: ought we not to riſe up on all ſides againſt ſuch infernal maxims? theſe put the poniard into the hand of that member who depriv'd *France* of *Henry the Great*: theſe plac'd the picture of *James Clement* on the altar, and his name amongſt the ſaints: theſe took away the life of *William* prince of *Orange*, founder of the liberty and proſperity of his country. *Salcede* ſhot at and wounded him in the forehead with a piſtol; and *Strada* tells us, that *Salcede* wou'd not dare to undertake that enterpriſe till he had purify'd his ſoul by confeſſion at the feet of a Dominican, and fortify'd it by the holy ſacrament. *Herrera* has ſomething more horrible, and more ridiculous concerning it. *He ſtood firm*, (ſays he) *after the example of our ſaviour Jeſus Chriſt, and his ſaints. Balthaſar Girard*, who afterwards took away the life of that great man, behav'd in the ſame manner as *Salcede*.

I have remark'd, that all thoſe who voluntary committed

mitted ſuch crimes were young men like *Seid. Balthaſar Girard* was about twenty years old, and the four *Spaniards*, who had bound themſelves by oath with him to kill the prince, were of the ſame age. The monſter who kill'd *Henry* III. was but four-and twenty, and *Poltrot*, who aſſaſſinated the great *Duke of Guiſe* only twenty five: this is the age of ſeduction and madneſs. In *England* I was once a witneſs how far the power of fanaticiſm cou'd work on a weak and youthful imagination: a boy of ſixteen, whoſe name was *Shepherd*, engag'd to aſſaſſinate king *George* I. your majeſty's grandfather by the mother's ſide. What could prompt him to ſuch madneſs? the only reaſon to be aſſigned was, that *Shepherd* was not of the ſame religion with the king. They took pity on his youth, offered him his pardon, and for a long time endeavoured to bring him to repentance; but he always perſiſted in ſaying, it was better to obey God than man; and if they let him go, the firſt uſe he made of of his liberty ſhould be to kill the king: ſo that they were obliged at laſt to execute him as a monſter, whom they deſpaired of bringing to any ſenſe of reaſon.

I will venture to affirm, that all who have ſeen any thing of mankind muſt have remarked, how eaſily

nature

nature is ſometimes ſacrificed to ſuperſtition: how many fathers have deteſted and diſinherited their children? how many brothers have perſecuted brothers on this deſtructive principle? I have myſelf ſeen inſtances of it in more than one family.

If ſuperſtition does not always ſignalize itſelf in thoſe glaring crimes which hiſtory tranſmits to us, in ſociety it does every day all the miſchief it poſſibly can: diſunites friends, ſeparates kindred and relations, deſtroys the wiſe and worthy by the hands of fools and enthuſiaſts: it does not indeed every day poiſon a *Socrates*, but it baniſhes *Deſcartes* from a city which ought to be the aſylum of liberty, and gives *Jurieu*, who acted the part of a prophet, credit enough to impoveriſh the wiſe philoſopher *Bayle*: it, baniſhed the ſucceſſor of the great *Leibnitz*, and deprives a noble aſſembly of young men that crouded to his lectures of pleaſure and improvement: and to re-eſtabliſh him heaven muſt raiſe up amongſt us a royal philoſopher, that true miracle which is ſo rarely to be ſeen. In vain does human reaſon advance towards perfection, by means of that philoſophy which of late hath made ſo great a progreſs in *Europe*: in vain do you, moſt noble prince, both inſpire and practice this humane philoſophy: whilſt in the ſame age wherein reaſon raiſes her throne

throne on one ſide, the moſt abſurd fanaticiſm adorns her altars on the other.

It may perhaps be objected to me, that, out of my too abundant zeal, I have made *Mahomet* in this tragedy guilty of a crime which in reality he was not capable of committing. The count de *Boulainvilliers*, ſome time ſince, wrote the life of this prophet, whom he endeavoured to repreſent as a great man, appointed by providence to puniſh the chriſtian world, and change the face of at leaſt one half of the globe. *Mr. Sale* likewiſe, who has given us an excellent tranſlation of the alcoran into Engliſh, wou'd perſuade us to look upon *Mahomet* as a *Numa* or a *Theſeus*. I will readily acknowledge, that we ought to reſpect him, if, born a legitimate prince, or call'd to government by the voice of the people, he had inſtituted uſeful and peaceful laws like *Numa*, or like *Theſeus*, defended his countrymen: but for a driver of camels to ſtir up a faction in his village; to aſſociate himſelf with a ſet of wretched Coracites, and perſuade them that he had an interview with the angel *Gabriel*; to boaſt that he was carry'd up to heaven, and there receiv'd part of that unintellible book which contradicts common ſenſe in every page; that in order to procure reſpect to this ridiculous performance he ſhou'd carry fire and ſword

into

into his country, murther fathers, and raviſh their daughters, and after all give thoſe whom he conquer'd the choice of his religion or death; this is ſurely what no man will pretend to vindicate, unleſs he was born a *Turk*, and ſuperſtition had totally extinquiſhed in him the light of nature.

Mahomet, I know, did not actually commit that particular crime which is the ſubject of this tragedy: hiſtory only informs us, that he took away the wife of *Seid*, one of his followers, and perſecuted *Abuſophan*, whom I call *Zopir*; but what is not that man capable of, who, in the name of God, makes war againſt his country? It was not my deſign merely to repreſent a real fact, but real manners and characters, to make men think as they naturally muſt in their circumſtances; but above all it was my intention to ſhew the horrid ſchemes which villainy can invent, and fanaticiſm put in practice. Mahomet is here no more than *Tartuffe* in arms.

Upon the whole I ſhall think myſelf amply rewarded for my labour, if any one of thoſe weak mortals, who are ever ready to receive the impreſſions of a madneſs foreign to their nature; ſhou'd learn from this piece to guard themſelves againſt ſuch fatal deluſions; if after being ſhock'd at the dreadful conſequences of

Seid's

Seid's obedience, he ſhou'd ſay to himſelf, why muſt I blindly follow the blind who cry out to me, hate, perſecute all who are raſh enough not to be of the ſame opinion with ourſelves, even in things and matters we do not underſtand? what infinite ſervice wou'd it be to mankind to eradicate ſuch falſe ſentiments! A ſpirit of indulgence wou'd make us all brothers; a ſpirit of perſecution can create nothing but monſters. This I know is your majeſty's opinion: to live with ſuch a prince, and ſuch a philoſopher, wou'd be my greateſt happineſs; my ſincere attachment can only be equall'd by my regret; but if other duties draw me away, they can never blot out the reſpect I owe to a prince, who talks and thinks like a man, who deſpiſes that ſpecious gravity which is always a cover for meanneſs and ignorance: a prince who converſes with freedom, becauſe he is not afraid of being known; who is ſtill eager to be inſtructed, and at the ſame time capable himſelf of inſtructing the moſt learned and the moſt ſagacious.

I ſhall, whilſt I have life, remain with the moſt profound reſpect, and deepeſt ſenſe of gratitude, your majeſty's, &c. &c. &c.

*A LETTER from Mr. VOLTAIRE TO POPE BENEDICT XIV.

Moſt bleſſed father,

YOUR holineſs will pardon the liberty taken by one of the loweſt of the faithful, though a zealous admirer of virtue, of ſubmitting to the head of the true religion this performance, written in oppoſition to the founder of a falſe and barbarous ſect. To whom cou'd I with more propriety inſcribe a ſatire on the cruelty and errors of a falſe prophet, than to the vicar and repreſentative of a God of truth and mercy? your holineſs will therefore give me leave to throw at your feet both the piece and the author of it, and humbly to requeſt your protection of the one, and your benediction of the other; in hopes of which, with the profoundeſt reverence, I kiſs your ſacred feet.

Paris, Auguſt 17, 1745.

---

* Theſe three letters are tranſlated from the Italian.

The

The ANSWER of Pope BENEDICT XIV. To Mr. VOLTAIRE.

Benedictus P. P. dilecto filio salutem & Apostolicam Benedictionem.

THIS day sev'nnight I was favor'd with your excellent tragedy of *Mahomet*, which I have read with great pleasure: Cardinal *Passionei* has likewise presented me with your fine poem of *Fontenoy*. Signor *Leprotti* this day repeated to me your * distich made on my retreat. Yesterday morning Cardinal *Valenti* gave me your letter of the 17th of *August*. So many are the obligations which you have conferr'd on me, for which I am greatly indebted to you; for all and every one of them, and to assure you that I have the highest esteem for your merit, which is universally acknowledg'd.

The distich has been publish'd at *Rome*, and objected to by one of the *litterati*, who, in a public conversation, affirm'd that there was a mistake in it with regard to the word *hic*, which is made short, whereas it ought to be always long. To which I reply'd, that

* The distich is as follows:
Lambertinus hic est, Romæ decus, & pater orbis,
Qui mundum scriptis docuit, virtutibus ornat.

it

it may be either long or ſhort; *Virgil* having made it ſhort in this verſe;

Solus hic inflexit ſenſus, animumque labantem.

And long in another,

Hic finis Priami fatorum, hic exitus illum.

The anſwer I think was pretty full and convincing, conſidering that I have not look'd into *Virgil* theſe fifty years. The cauſe however is properly yours; to your honour and ſincerity therefore, of which I have the higheſt opinion, I ſhall leave it to be defended againſt your oppoſers and mine, and here give you my apoſtolical benediction. *Datum Romæ apud ſanctam Mariam majorem die* 19 *Sept. Pontificatus noſtri anno ſexto.*

A LETTER of THANKS FROM Mr. VOLTAIRE to the POPE.

THE features of your excellency are not better expreſs'd on the medal you were ſo kind as to ſend me, than are the features of your mind in the letter which you honour'd me with: permit me to throw at your feet my ſincereſt acknowledgments: in points of

is

literature, as well as in matters of more importance, your infallibiliy is not to be diſputed: your excellency is much better vers'd in the *Latin* tongue than the *Frenchman* whom you condeſcended to correct: I am indeed aſtoniſh'd how you cou'd ſo readily appeal to *Virgil:* the popes were always rank'd amongſt the moſt learned ſovereign's, but amongſt them I believe there never was one in whom ſo much learning and taſte united.

Agnoſco rerum dominos, gentemque togatam.

If the *Frenchman* who found fault with the word *hic* had known as much of *Virgil* as your excellency, he might have recollected a verſe where *hic* is both long and ſhort

Hic vir *hic* eſt tibi quem promitti ſæpius audis.

I cannot help conſidering this verſe as a happy preſage of the favors conferr'd on me by your excellency. Thus might *Rome* cry out when *Benedict* XIV. was rais'd to the ſupremacy: with the utmoſt reſpect and gratitude I kiſs your ſacred feet, &c. &c.

DRA-

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MAHOMET.

ZOPIR, Scheik of Mecca.

OMAR. } General and ſecond in command to Mahomet.

SEID, } Slaves to Mahomet.
PALMIRA, }

PHANOR, Senator of Mecca.

Company of Meccans.

Company of Muſulmen.

SCENE, MECCA.

MAHOMET.

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

ZOPIR, PHANOR.

ZOPIR.

THink'ſt thou thy friend will ever bend the knee
To this proud hypocrite; ſhall I fall down
And worſhip, I who baniſh'd him from Mecca?
No: puniſh me, juſt heav'n, as I deſerve,
If e'er this hand, the friend of innocence
And freedom, ſtoop to cheriſh foul rebellion,
Or aid impoſture to deceive mankind!!

PHANOR.

Thy zeal is noble, and becomes the chief
Of Iſmael's ſacred ſenate, but may prove

Deſtruc-

Deſtructive to the cauſe it means to ſerve:
Thy ardor cannot check the rapid pow'r
Of Mahomet, and but provokes his vengeance:
There was a time when you might ſafely draw
The ſword of juſtice, to defend the rights
Of Mecca, and prevent the flames of war
From ſpreading o'er the land; then Mahomet
Was but a bold and factious citizen,
But now he is a conqu'ror, and a king:
Mecca's impoſtor at Medina ſhines
A holy prophet; nations bend before him,
And learn to worſhip crimes which we abhor.
Ev'n here, a band of wild enthuſiaſts, drunk
With furious zeal, ſupport his fond deluſions,
His idle tales, and fancy'd miracles:
Theſe ſpread ſedition thro' the gaping throng,
Invite his forces, and believe a God
Inſpires, and renders him invincible.
The lovers of their country think with you,
But wiſeſt counſels are not always follow'd;
Falſe zeal, and fear, and love of novelty
Alarm the croud; already half our city
Is left unpeopled; Mecca cries aloud
To thee her father, and demands a peace.

ZOPIR.

ZOPIR.

Peace with a traitor! coward nation, what
Can you expect but ſlav'ry from a tyrant!
Go, bend your ſupple knees, and proſtrate fall
Before the idol whoſe oppreſſive hand
Shall cruſh you all: for me, I hate the traitor;
This heart's too deeply wounded to forgive:
The ſavage murth'rer robb'd me of a wife
And two dear children: nor is his reſentment
Leſs fierce than mine; I forc'd his camp, purſued
The coward to his tent, and ſlew his ſon:
The torch of hatred is lit up between us,
And time can ne'er extinguiſh it.

PHANOR.

I hope
It never will; yet ſhou'd'ſt thou hide the flame,
And ſacrifice thy griefs to public good:
What if he lay this noble city waſte,
Will that avenge thee, will that ſerve thy cauſe?
Thou haſt loſt all, ſon, brother, daughter, wife,
Mecca alone remains to give thee comfort,
Do not loſe that, do not deſtroy thy country.

ZOPIR.

Kingdoms are loſt by cowardice alone.

PHANOR.

PHANOR.

As oft perhaps by obſtinate reſiſtance.

ZOPIR.

Then let us periſh, if it be our fate.

PHANOR.

When thou art almoſt in the harbour thus
To brave the ſtorm, is falſe and fatal courage:
Kind heav'n, thou ſee'ſt, points out to thee the means
To ſoften this proud tyrant; fair Palmira
Thy beauteous captive, brought up in the camp
Of this deſtructive conqueror, was ſent
By gracious heav'n, the meſſenger of peace,
Thy guardian angel, to appeaſe the wrath
Of Mahomet; already by his herald
He has demanded her.

ZOPIR.

And wou'd'ſt thou have me
Give up ſo fair a prize to this barbarian?
What! whilſt the tyrant ſpreads deſtruction round him,
Unpeoples kingdoms, and deſtroys mankind,
Shall beauty's charms be ſacrific'd to bribe
A madman's frenzy? I ſhou'd envy him
That lovely fair one more than all his glory;

Not

Not that I feel the ſtings of wild deſire,
Or, in the evening of my days, indulge,
Old as I am, a ſhameleſs paſſion for her;
But, whether objects born like her to pleaſe,
Spite of ourſelves demand our tend'reſt pity,
Or that perhaps a childleſs father hopes
To find in her another daughter, why
I know not, but for that unhappy maid
Still am I anxious; be it weakneſs in me,
Or reaſon's pow'rful voice, I cannot bear
To ſee her in the hands of Mahomet;
Wou'd I cou'd mould her to my wiſhes, form
Her willing mind, and make her hate the tyrant
As I do! ſhe has ſent to ſpeak with me
Here in the ſacred porch—and lo! ſhe comes:
On her fair cheek the bluſh of modeſty
And candor ſpeaks the virtues of her heart.

SCENE II.

ZOPIR, PALMIRA.

ZOPIR.

Hail, lovely maid! the chance of cruel war
Hath made thee Zopir's captive, but thou art not
Amongſt barbarians; all with me revere
Palmira's virtues, and lament her fate,

Whilſt youth with innocence and beauty plead
Thy cauſe; whate'er thou aſk'ſt in Zopir's pow'r
Thou ſhalt not aſk in vain: my life declines
Towards its period, and if my laſt hours
Can give Palmira joy, I ſhall eſteem them
The beſt, the happieſt I have ever known.

PALMIRA.

Theſe two months paſt, my lord, your pris'ner here,
Scarce have I felt the yoke of ſlavery;
Your gen'rous hand, ſtill rais'd to ſooth affliction,
Hath wiped the tears of ſorrow from my eyes,
And ſoften'd all the rigour of my fate:
Forgive me, if embolden'd by your goodneſs
I aſk for more, and center ev'ry hope
Of future happineſs on you alone;
Forgive me, if to Mahomet's requeſt
I join Palmira's, and implore that freedom
He hath already aſk'd: O liſten to him,
And let me ſay, that after heav'n and him
I am indebted moſt to gen'rous Zopir.

ZOPIR.

Has then oppreſſion ſuch enticing charms
That thou ſhou'd'ſt wiſh and beg to be the ſlave
Of Mahomet, to hear the claſh of arms,

With

With him to live in deſerts, and in caves,
And wander o'er his ever ſhifting country?

PALMIRA.

Where'er the mind with eaſe and pleaſure dwells,
There is our home, and there our native country:
He form'd my ſoul; to Mahomet I owe
The kind inſtruction of my earlier years;
Taught by the happy part'ners of his bed,
Who ſtill adoring and ador'd by him
Send up their pray'rs to heav'n for his dear ſafety,
I liv'd in peace and joy! for ne'er did woe
Pollute that ſeat of bliſs till the ſad hour
Of my misfortune, when wide-waſting war
Ruſh'd in upon us and enſlav'd Palmira:
Pity, my lord, a heart oppreſs'd with grief,
That ſighs for objects far far diſtant from her.

ZOPIR.

I underſtand you, madam, you expect
The tyrant's hand, and hope to ſhare his throne.

PALMIRA.

I honour him, my lord; my trembling ſoul
Looks up to Mahomet with holy fear
As to a God; but never did this heart
E'er cheriſh the vain hope that he wou'd deign

To wed Palmira: No: ſuch ſplendor ill
Wou'd ſuit my humble ſtate.

ZOPIR.

Whoe'er thou art,
He was not born, I truſt, to be thy huſband,
No, nor thy maſter; much I err, or thou
Spring'ſt from a race deſign'd by heav'n to check
This haughty Arab, and give laws to him
Who thus aſſumes the majeſty of kings.

PALMIRA.

Alas! we know not what it is to boaſt
Of birth or fortune; from our infant years
Without or parents, friends, or country, doom'd
To ſlav'ry; here reſign'd to our hard fate,
Strangers to all but to that God we ſerve,
We live content in humble poverty.

ZOPIR.

And can ye be content? and are ye ſtrangers,
Without a father, and without a home?
I am a childleſs, poor, forlorn, old man;
You might have been the comfort of my age:
To form a plan of future happineſs
For you, had ſoften'd my own wretchedneſs,
And made me ſome amends for all my wrongs:
But you abhor my country and my law.

PAL

PALMIRA.

I am not miſtreſs of myſelf, and how
Can I be thine? I pity thy misfortunes,
And bleſs thee for thy goodneſs to Palmira;
But Mahomet has been a father to me.

ZOPIR.

A father! ye juſt Gods! the vile impoſtor!

PALMIRA.

Can he deſerve that name, the holy prophet,
The great ambaſſador of heav'n, ſent down
T' interpret its high will?

ZOPIR.

Deluded mortals!
How blind ye are, to follow this proud madman,
This happy robber, whom my juſtice ſpared,
And raiſe him from the ſcaffold to a throne!

PALMIRA.

My lord, I ſhudder at your imprecations;
Though I am bound by honour and the ties
Of gratitude to love thee for thy bounties,
This blaſphemy againſt my kind protector
Cancels the bond, and fills my ſoul with horror.
O ſuperſtition, how thy ſavage pow'r
Deprives at once the beſt and tend'reſt hearts
Of their humanity!

ZOPIR.

Alas! Palmira,
Spite of myſelf, I feel for thy misfortunes,
Pity thy weakneſs, and lament thy fate.

PALMIRA.

You will not grant me then——

ZOPIR.

I cannot yield thee
To him who has deceiv'd thy eaſy heart,
To a baſe tyrant; No: thou art a treaſure
Too precious to be parted with, and mak'ſt
This hypocrite but more deteſted.

SCENE III.

ZOPIR, PALMIRA, PHANOR,

ZOPIR.

Phanor,
What woud'ſt thou?

PHANOR.

At the city gate that leads
To Moad's fertile plain the valiant Omar
Is juſt arriv'd.

ZOPIR.

Indeed! the tyrant's friend,
The fierce vindictive Omar, his new convert,
Who

Who had ſo long oppos'd him, and ſtill fought
For us!

PHANOR.

Perhaps he yet may ſerve his country,
Already he hath offer'd terms of peace;
Our chiefs have parley'd with him, he demands
An hoſtage, and I hear they've granted him
The noble Seid.

PALMIRA.

Seid? gracious heav'n!

PHANOR.

Behold! my lord, he comes.

ZOPIR.

Ha! Omar here!
There's no retreating now, he muſt be heard;
Palmira, you may leave us.—O ye gods
Of my forefathers, you who have protected
The ſons of Iſmael theſe three thouſand years,
And thou, O Sun, with all thoſe ſacred lights
That glitter round us, witneſs to my truth,
Aid and ſupport me in the glorious conflict
With proud iniquity!

SCENE IV.

ZOPIR, OMAR, PHANOR, Attendants.

ZOPIR.

At length, it ſeems,
Omar returns, after a three years abſence,
To viſit that lov'd country which his hand
So long defended, and his honeſt heart
Has now betray'd: deſerter of our gods,
Deſerter of our laws, how dar'ſt thou thus
Approach theſe ſacred walls to perſecute
And to oppreſs; a public robber's ſlave;
What is thy errand? wherefore com'ſt thou hither?

OMAR.

To pardon thee: by me our holy prophet,
In pity to thy age, thy well-known valour,
And paſt misfortunes, offers thee his hand:
Omar is come to bring thee terms of peace.

ZOPIR.

And ſhall a factious rebel offer peace
Who ſhou'd have ſued for pardon? gracious gods!
Will ye permit him to uſurp your pow'r,
And ſuffer Mahomet to rule mankind?
Doſt thou not bluſh, vile minion as thou art,
To ſerve a traitor? has thou not beheld him
Friendleſs and poor, an humble citizen,

And

And ranking with the meaneſt of the throng?
How little then in fortune or in fame!

OMAR.

Thus low and grov'ling ſouls like thine pretend
To judge of merit, whilſt in fortune's ſcale
Ye weigh the worth of men: proud empty being,
Doſt thou not know that the poor worm which crawls
Low on the earth, and the imperial eagle
That ſoars to heav'n, in the all-ſeeing eye
Of their eternal maker are the ſame,
And ſhrink to nothing? men are equal all;]
From virtue only true diſtinction ſprings,
And not from birth: there are exalted ſpirits
Who claim reſpect and honour from themſelves
And not their anceſtors: theſe, theſe my lord,
Are heav'n's peculiar care, and ſuch is he
Whom I obey, and who alone deſerves
To be a maſter; all mankind like me
Shall one day fall before the conqu'ror's feet,
And future ages follow my example.

ZOPIR.

Omar, I know thee well; thy artful hand
In vain hath drawn the viſionary portrait;
Thou may'ſt deceive the multitude, but know,

What Mecca worſhips Zopir can deſpiſe:
Be honeſt then, and with th'impartial eye
Of reaſon look on Mahomet; behold him
But as a mortal, and conſider well
By what baſe arts the vile impoſtor roſe,
A camel-driver, a poor abject ſlave,
Who firſt deceived a fond believing woman,
And now ſupported by an idle dream
Draws in the weak and cred'lous multitude:
Condemn'd to exile, I chaſtis'd the rebel
Too lightly, and his inſolence returns
With double force to puniſh my indulgence.
He fled with Fatima from cave to cave,
And ſuffer'd chains, contempt and baniſhment;
Mean time the fury which he call'd divine
Spread like a ſubtle poiſon thro' the croud;
Medina was infected: Omar then,
To reaſon's voice attentive, wou'd have ſtopp'd
Th'impetuous torrent; he had courage then
And virtue to attack the proud uſurper,
Tho' now he crouches to him like a ſlave.
If thy proud maſter be indeed a prophet,
How did'ſt thou dare to puniſh him? or why,
If an impoſtor, wilt thou dare to ſerve him?

OMAR.

OMAR.

I puniſh'd him becauſe I knew him not;
But now, the veil of ignorance remov'd,
I ſee him as he is; behold him born
To change th' aſtoniſh'd world, and rule mankind:
When I beheld him riſe in awful pomp
Intrepid, eloquent, by all admir'd,
By all ador'd; beheld him ſpeak and act,
Puniſh and pardon like a God, I lent
My little aid, and joyn'd the conqueror.
Altars, thou know'ſt, and thrones were our reward;
Once I was blind, like thee, but, thanks to heav'n!
My eyes are open'd now; wou'd, Zopir, thine
Were open too! let me intreat thee, change,
As I have done; no longer boaſt thy zeal
And cruel hatred, nor blaſpheme our God,
But fall ſubmiſſive at the hero's feet
Whom thou has injur'd; kiſs the hand that bears
The angry light'ning leſt it fall upon thee.
Omar is now the ſecond of mankind;
A place of honour yet remains for thee,
If prudent thou wilt yield, and own a maſter:
What we have been thou know'ſt, and what we are:
The multitude are ever weak and blind,
Made for our uſe, born but to ſerve the great;

But

But to admire, believe us, and obey:
Reign then with us, partake the feaſt of grandeur,
No longer deign to imitate the croud,
But henceforth make 'em tremble.

ZOPIR.

Tremble thou,
And Mahomet, with all thy hateful train:
Think'ſt thou that Mecca's faithful chief will fall
At an impoſtor's feet, and crown a rebel?
I am no ſtranger to his ſpecious worth;
His courage and his conduct have my praiſe;
Were he but virtuous I like thee ſhou'd love him;
But as he is I hate the tyrant: hence,
Nor talk to me of his deceitful mercy,
His clemency and goodneſs; all his aim
Is cruelty and vengeance: with this hand
I ſlew his darling ſon; I baniſh'd him:
My hatred is inflexible, and ſo
Is Mahomet's reſentment: if he e'er
Re-enters Mecca, he muſt cut his way
Thro' Zopir's blood, for he is deeply ſtain'd
With crimes that juſtice never can forgive.

OMAR.

To ſhew thee Mahomet is merciful,
That he can pardon tho' thou can'ſt not, here

I offer thee the third of all our ſpoils
Which we have ta'en from tributary kings;
Name your conditions, and the terms of peace;
Set your own terms on fair Palmira; take
Our treaſures, and be happy.

ZOPIR.

Think'ſt thou Zopir
Will baſely ſell his honour and his country,
Will blaſt his name with infamy for wealth,
The foul reward of guilt, or that Palmira
Will ever own a tyrant for her maſter?
She is too virtuous e'er to be the ſlave
Of Mahomet, nor will I ſuffer her
To fall a ſacrifice to baſe impoſtors,
Who wou'd ſubvert the laws, and undermine
The ſafety and the virtue of mankind.

OMAR.

Implacably ſevere; thou talk'ſt to Omar
As if he were a criminal, and thou
His judge; but henceforth I wou'd have thee act
A better part, and treat me as a friend,
As the ambaſſador of Mahomet,
A conqu'ror and a king.

ZOPIR.

ZOPIR.

A king! who made,
Who crown'd him?

OMAR.

Victory: reſpect his glory,
And tremble at his pow'r: amidſt his conqueſts
The hero offers peace; our ſwords are ſtill
Unſheath'd, and woe to this rebellious city
If ſhe ſubmits not: think what blood muſt flow,
The blood of half our fellow-citizens;
Conſider, Zopir, Mahomet is here,
And even now requeſts to ſpeak with thee.

ZOPIR.

Ha! Mahomet!

OMAR.

Yes, he conjures thee.

ZOPIR.

Traitor!
Were I the ſole deſpotic ruler here
He ſhou'd be anſwer'd ſoon——by chaſtiſement.

OMAR.

I pity, Zopir, thy pretended virtue;
But ſince the ſenate inſolently claim
Divided empire with thee, to the ſenate
Let us begone; Omar will meet thee there.

ZOPIR.

ZOPIR.

I'll follow thee: we then ſhall ſee who beſt
Can plead his cauſe: I will defend my gods,
My country, and her laws; thy impious voice
Shall bellow for thy vengeful deity,
Thy perſecuting god, and his falſe prophet.
[Turning to Phanor.
Haſte, Phanor, and with me repulſe the traitor;
Who ſpares a villain is a villain:—come,
Let us, my friend, unite to cruſh his pride,
Subvert his wily purpoſes, deſtroy him,
Or periſh in th'attempt: If Mecca liſtens
To Zopir's councils, I ſhall free my country
From a proud tyrant's pow'r, and ſave mankind.

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT II. SCENE I.

SEID, PALMIRA.

PALMIRA.

WElcome, my Seid, do I ſee thee here
Once more in ſafety? what propitious God
Conducted

Conducted thee? at length Palmira's woes
Shall have an end, and we may yet be happy.

SEID.

Thou ſweeteſt charmer, balm of ev'ry woe,
Dear object of my wiſhes and my tears,
O ſince that day of blood when fluſh'd with conqueſt
The fierce barbarian ſnatch'd thee from my arms,
When mid'ſt a heap of ſlaughter'd friends I lay
Expiring on the ground, and call'd on death,
But call'd in vain, to end my hated being,
What have I ſuffer'd for my dear Palmira!
How have I curs'd the tardy hours that long
Witheld my vengeance! my diſtracted ſoul
Impatient thirſted for the bloody field,
That with theſe hands I might lay waſte this ſeat
Of ſlav'ry, where Palmira mourn'd ſo long
In ſad captivity; but thanks to heav'n!
Our holy prophet, whoſe deep purpoſes
Are far beyond the ken of human wiſdom,
Hath hither ſent his choſen ſervant Omar;
I flew to meet him, they requir'd an hoſtage;
I gave my faith, and they receiv'd it; firm
In my reſolve to live or die for thee.

PAL-

PALMIRA.

Seid, the very moment e'er thou cam'ſt
To calm my fears, and ſave me from deſpair,
Was I intreating the proud raviſher;
Thou know'ſt, I cry'd, the only good on earth
I priz'd is left behind, reſtore it to me:
Then claſp'd his knees, fell at the tyrant's feet,
And bath'd 'em with my tears, but all in vain:
How his unkind refuſal ſhock'd my ſoul!
My eyes grew dim, and motionleſs I ſtood
As one depriv'd of life; no ſuccour nigh,
No ray of hope was left, when Seid came
To eaſe my troubled heart, and bring me comfort.

SEID.

Who cou'd behold unmov'd Palmira's woes?

PALMIRA.

The cruel Zopir; not inſenſible
He ſeem'd to my misfortunes, yet at laſt
Unkindly told me, I muſt never hope
To leave theſe walls, for nought ſhou'd tear me from him.

SEID.

'Tis falſe; for Mahomet, my royal maſter,
With the victorious Omar, and forgive me,
If to theſe noble friends I proudly add

The

The name of Seid, theſe ſhall ſet thee free,
Dry up thy tears, and make Palmira happy:
The God of Mahomet, our great protector,
That God whoſe ſacred ſtandard I have borne;
He who deſtroy'd Medina's haughty ramparts
Shall lay rebellious Mecca at our feet;
Omar is here, and the glad people look
With eyes of friendſhip on him; in the name
Of Mahomet he comes, and meditates
Some noble purpoſe.

PALMIRA.

Mahomet indeed
Might free us, and unite two hearts long ſince
Devoted to his cauſe; but he, alas!
Is far remov'd, and we abandon'd captives.

SCENE II.

PALMIRA, SEID, OMAR.

OMAR.

Deſpair not; heav'n perhaps may yet reward you,
For Mahomet and liberty are nigh.

SEID.

Is he then come?

PALMIRA.

Our friend and father?

OMAR.

OMAR.

Yes.

I met the council, and by Mahomet
Inſpir'd, addreſs'd them thus: "Within theſe walls,
"Ev'n here, I cry'd, the favorite of heav'n,
"Our holy prophet, firſt drew breath, the great
"The mighty conqu'ror, the ſupport of kings,
"And will ye not permit him but to rank
"As friend and fellow citizen? he comes not
"To ruin or enſlave, but to protect,
"To teach you and to ſave, to fix his pow'r,
"And hold dominion o'er the conquer'd heart."
I ſpake; the hoary ſages ſmil'd applauſe,
And all inclin'd to favor us; but Zopir,
Still reſolute and ſtill inflexible,
Declar'd, the people ſhou'd be call'd together,
And give their gen'ral voice: the people met,
Again I ſpake, addreſs'd the citizens,
Exhorted, threaten'd, practis'd ev'ry art
To win their favor, and at length prevail'd;
The gates are open'd to great Mahomet,
Who after fifteen years of cruel exile
Returns to bleſs once more his native land;
With him the gallant Hali, brave Hercides,
And Ammon the invincible, beſides
A numerous train of choſen followers:

The

The people throng around him; ſome with looks
Of hatred, ſome with ſmiles of cordial love;
Some bleſs the hero, and ſome curſe the tyrant:
Some threaten and blaſpheme, whilſt others fall
Beneath his feet, embrace and worſhip him;
Mean-time the names of God, of peace, and freedom,
Are eccho'd thro' the all-believing croud;
Whilſt Zopir's dying party bellows forth
In idle threats its impotent revenge:
Amidſt their cries, unruffled and ſerene,
In triumph walks the god-like Mahomet,
Bearing the olive in his hand; already
Peace is proclaim'd, and ſee! the conqu'ror comes.

SCENE III.

MAHOMET, OMAR, HERCIDES, SEID, PALMIRA, Attendants.

MAHOMET.

My friends, and fellow-lab'rers, valiant Hali,
Morad, and Hammon, and Hercides, hence
To your great work, and in my name inſtruct
The people, lead them to the paths of truth,
Promiſe and threaten; let my God alone
Be worſhipp'd, and let thoſe who will not love
Be taught to fear him. — Seid, art thou here?

SEID.

SEID.

ly ever-honour'd father, and my king,
ed by that pow'r divine who guided thee
o Mecca's walls, preventing your commands
came, prepar'd to live or die with thee.

MAHOMET.

ou ſhou'd have waited for my orders; he
Who goes beyond his duty knows it not;
am heavn's miniſter, and thou art mine;
earn then of me to ſerve and to obey.

PALMIRA.

orgive, my lord, a youth's impatient ardor:
rought up together from our infant years,
he ſame our fortunes, and our thoughts the ſame:
las! my life has been a life of ſorrow;
ong have I languiſh'd in captivity,
ar from my friends, from Seid, and from thee;
nd now at laſt, when I beheld a ray
f comfort ſhining on me, thy unkindneſs
lafts my fair hopes, and darkens all the ſcene.

MAHOMET.

almira, 'tis enough: I know thy virtues;
et nought diſturb thee: ſpite of all my cares,

Glory,

Glory, and empire, and the weight of war,
I will remember thee; Palmira ſtill
Lives in my heart, and ſhares it with mankind:
Seid ſhall join our troops; thou, gentle maid,
May'ſt ſerve thy God in peace: fear nought but Zopir.

SCENE IV.

MAHOMET, OMAR.

MAHOMET.

Brave Omar, ſtay, for in thy faithful boſom
Will I repoſe the ſecrets of my ſoul:
The ling'ring progreſs of a doubtful ſiege
May ſtop our rapid courſe; we muſt not give
Theſe weak deluded mortals too much time
To pry into our actions: prejudice
Rules o'er the vulgar with deſpotic ſway.
Thou know'ſt there is a tale which I have ſpred
And they believe, that univerſal empire
Awaits the prophet, who to Mecca's walls
Shall lead his conqu'ring bands, and bring her peace.
'Tis mine to mark the errors of mankind,
And to avail me of them; but whilſt thus
I try each art to ſooth this fickle people,
What thinks my friend of Seid and Palmira?

OMAR.

OMAR.

I think moſt nobly of them, that amidſt
Thoſe few ſtaunch followers who own no God,
No faith but thine, who love thee as their father,
Their friend, and benefactor, none obey
Or ſerve thee with an humbler, better mind;
They are moſt faithful.

MAHOMET.

Omar, thou'rt deceiv'd;
They are my worſt of foes, they love each other.

OMAR.

And can you blame their tenderneſs?

MAHOMET.

My friend,
I'll tell thee all my weakneſs.

OMAR.

How, my lord!

MAHOMET.

Thou know'ſt the reigning paſſion of my ſoul;
Whilſt proud ambition and the cares of empire
Weigh'd heavy on me; Mahomet's hard life
Has been a conflict with oppoſing nature,
Whom I have vanquiſh'd by auſterity,
And ſelf-denial; I have baniſh'd from me
That baleful poiſon which unnerves mankind,

Which

Which only ſerves to fire them into madneſs,
And brutal follies; on the burning ſand
Or deſert rocks I brave th' inclement ſky,
And bear the ſeaſons rough viciſſitude:
Love is my only ſolace, the dear object
Of all my toils, the idol I adore,
The God of Mahomet, the pow'rful rival
Of my ambition: know, mid'ſt all my queens,
Palmira reigns ſole miſtreſs of my heart:
Think then what pangs of jealouſy thy friend
Muſt feel when ſhe expreſs'd her fatal paſſion
For Seid.

OMAR.

But thou art reveng'd.

MAHOMET.

Judge thou
If ſoon I ought not to take vengeance on them;
That thou may'ſt hate my rival more, I'll tell thee
Who Seid and Palmira are — the children
Of him whom I abhor, my deadlieſt foe.

OMAR.

Ha! Zopir!

MAHOMET.

Is their father: fifteen years
Are paſt ſince brave Hercides to my care

Gave

Gave up their infant years; they know not yet
Or who or what they are; I brought them up
Together; I indulg'd their lawleſs paſſion,
And added fewel to the guilty flame.
Methinks it is as if the hand of heav'n
Had meant in them to center ev'ry crime.
But I muſt — Ha! their father comes this way,
His eyes are full of bitterneſs and wrath
Againſt me: — now be vigilant, my Omar,
Hercides muſt be careful to poſſeſs
This moſt important paſs; return, and tell me
Whether 'tis moſt expedient to declare
Againſt him, or retreat: away.

SCENE V.

ZOPIR, MAHOMET.

ZOPIR.

Hard fate!
Unhappy Zopir! thus compell'd to meet
My worſt of foes, the foe of all mankind!

MAHOMET.

Since 'tis the will of heav'n that Mahomet
And Zopir ſhou'd at length unite, approach
Without a bluſh, and fearleſs tell thy tale.

ZOPIR.

I bluſh for thee alone, whoſe baneful arts
Have drawn thy country to the brink of ruin;
Who in the boſom of fair peace woud'ſt wage
Inteſtine war, looſen the ſacred bonds
Of friendſhip, and deſtroy our happineſs;
Beneath the veil of proffer'd terms thou mean'ſt
But to betray, whilſt diſcord ſtalks before thee:
Thou vile aſſemblage of hypocriſy
And inſolence, abhorred tyrant! thus
Do the chos'n miniſters of heav'n diſpenſe
Its ſacred bleſſings, and announce their God?

MAHOMET.

Wert thou not Zopir, I wou'd anſwer thee
As thou deſerv'ſt, in thunder, by the voice
Of that offended being thou derid'ſt:
Arm'd with the hallow'd koran I wou'd teach thee
To tremble and obey in humble ſilence:
And with the ſubject world to kneel before me;
But I will talk to thee without diſguiſe,
As man to man ſhou'd ſpeak, and friend to friend:
I have ambition, Zopir; where's the man
Who has it not? but never citizen,
Or chief, or prieſt, or king projected aught
So noble as the plan of Mahomet;

In

In acts or arms hath ev'ry nation ſhone
Superior in its turn; Arabia now
Steps forth; that gen'rous people, long unknown
And unreſpected, ſaw her glories ſunk,
Her honours loſt; but, lo! the hour is come
When ſhe ſhall riſe to vict'ry and renown;
The world lies deſolate from pole to pole;
India's a ſlave, and bleeding Perſia mourns
Her ſlaughter'd ſons; whilſt Egypt hangs the head
Dejected, from the walls of Conſtantine
Splendor is fled; the Roman empire torn
By diſcord, ſees its ſcatter'd members ſpread
On ev'ry ſide inglorious; let us raiſe
Arabia on the ruins of mankind:
The blind and tott'ring univerſe demands
Another worſhip, and another God.
Crete had her Minos, Ægypt her Oſiris,
To Aſia Zoroaſter gave his laws,
And Numa was in Italy ador'd:
O'er ſavage nations where nor monarch's ruled
Nor manners ſoften'd, nor religion taught,
Hath many a ſage his fruitleſs maxims ſpred;
Beneath a nobler yoke I mean to bend
The proſtrate world, and change their feeble laws,
Aboliſh their falſe worſhip, to pull down

Their pow'rleſs gods, and on my purer faith
Found univerſal empire: ſay not, Zopir,
That Mahomet betrays his country, no:
I mean but to deſtroy its weak ſupports,
And, baniſhing idolatry, unite it
Beneath one king, one prophet, and one God;
I ſhall ſubdue it but to make it glorious.

ZOPIR.

Is this thy purpoſe then, and dar'ſt thou thus
Avow it? can'ſt thou change the hearts of men,
And make them think like thee? are war and ſlaughter
The harbingers of wiſdom and of peace;
Can he who ravages inſtruct mankind?
If in the night of ignorance and error
We long have wander'd, muſt thy dreadful torch
Enlighten us? what right haſt thou to empire?

MAHOMET.

That right which firm exalted ſpirits claim
O'er vulgar minds.

ZOPIR.

Thus ev'ry bold impoſtor
May forge new fetters, and enſlave mankind:
He has a right, it ſeems, to cheat the world
If he can do it with an air of grandeur.

MAHOMET.

MAHOMET.

I know your people well; I know they want
A leader; my religion, true or falſe,
Is needful to them: what have all your gods
And all your idols done? what laurels grow
Beneath their altars? your low grov'ling ſect
Debaſes man, unnerves his active ſoul,
And makes it heavy, phlegmatic, and mean;
Whilſt mine exalts it, gives it ſtrength and courage:
My law forms heroes.

ZOPIR.

Rather call them robbers:
Away; nor bring thy hateful leſſons here;
Go to the ſchool of tyrants, boaſt thy frauds
To ſon Medina, where thou reign'ſt ſupreme,
Where blinded bigots bend beneath thy pow'r,
And thou behold'ſt thy equals at thy feet.

MAHOMET.

My equals! Mahomet has none; long ſince
I paſs'd 'em all; Medina is my own,
And Mecca trembles at me; if thou hold'ſt
Thy ſafety dear, receive the peace I offer.

ZOPIR.

Thou talk'ſt of peace, but 'tis not in thy heart;
I'm not to be deceiv'd.

MAHOMET.

I wou'd not have thee;
The weak deceive, the powerful command:
To-morrow I ſhall force thee to ſubmit;
To-day, obſerve, I wou'd have been thy friend.

ZOPIR.

Can we be friends? can Mahomet and Zopir
E'er be united? ſay, what God ſhall work
A miracle like that?

MAHOMET.

I'll tell thee one,
A pow'rful God, one that is always heard,
By me he ſpeaks to thee.

ZOPIR.

Who is it? name him.

MAHOMET.

Int'reſt, thy own dear, int'reſt.

ZOPIR.

Sooner heav'n
And hell ſhall be united; intereſt
May be the god of Mahomet, but mine
Is—juſtice: what ſhall join them to each other?
Where is the cement that muſt bind our friendſhip?
Is it that ſon I ſlew, or the warm blood
Of Zopir's houſe which thou has ſhed?

MAHO-

MAHOMET.

It is
Thy blood, thy ſon's——for now I will unveil
A ſecret to thee, known to none but me:
Thou weepeſt thy children dead; they both are—
living.

ZOPIR.

What ſay'ſt thou? living? unexpected bliſs!
My children living?

MAHOMET.

Yes; and both—my pris'ners.

ZOPIR.

My children ſlaves to thee? impoſſible!

MAHOMET.

My bounty nouriſh'd them.

ZOPIR.

And cou'd'ſt thou ſpare
A child of Zopir's?

MAHOMET.

For their father's faults
I wou'd not puniſh them.

ZOPIR.

But tell me, ſay,
For what are they reſerv'd?

MAHO-

MAHOMET.

Their life or death
Depend on me: ſpeak but the word, and thou
Art maſter of their fate.

ZOPIR.

O name the price
And thou ſhalt have it; muſt I give my blood,
Or muſt I bear their chains, and be the ſlave
Of Mahomet?

MAHOMET.

I aſk not either of thee:
Lend me thy aid but to ſubdue the world;
Surrender Mecca to me, and give up
Your temple, bid th' aſtoniſh'd people read
My ſacred Alkoran, be thou my vaſſal,
And fall before me, then will I reſtore
Thy ſon, perhaps hereafter may reward thee
With honours, and contract a cloſer tie
With Zopir.

ZOPIR.

Mahomet, thou ſee'ſt in me
A tender father: after fifteen years
Of cruel abſence, to behold my children,
To die in their embraces, were the firſt
And faireſt bleſſings that my ſoul cou'd wiſh for;

But

But if to thee I muſt betray my country,
Or ſacrifice my children, know, proud tyrant,
The choice is made already—fare thee well.

MAHOMET.

Inexorable dotard! but henceforth
I will be more implacable, more cruel
Ev'n than thyſelf.

SCENE VI.

MAHOMET, OMAR.

OMAR.

And ſo indeed thou muſt be,
Or all is loſt: already I have bought
Their ſecret counſels: Mahomet, to-morrow
The truce expires, and Zopir reaſſumes
His pow'r; thy life's in danger: half the ſenate
Are leagu'd againſt thee: thoſe who dare not fight
May hire the dark aſſaſſin to deſtroy thee;
May ſcreen their guilt beneath the maſk of juſtice,
And call the murther legal puniſhment.

MAHOMET.

Firſt they ſhall feel my vengeance: perſecution,
Thou know'ſt, has ever been my beſt ſupport.
Zopir muſt die.

OMAR.

'Tis well reſolv'd: his fate
Will teach the reſt obedience: loſe no time.

MAHOMET.

Yet, ſpite of my reſentment, I muſt hide
The murth'rous hand that deals the blow, to ſcape
Suſpicion's watchful eye, and not incenſe
The multitude.

OMAR.

They are not worth our care.

MAHOMET.

And yet they muſt be pleas'd: I want an arm
That will ſtrike boldly.

OMAR.

Seid is the man;
I'll anſwer for him.

MAHOMET.

Seid?

OMAR.

Ay: the beſt,
The fitteſt inſtrument to ſerve our purpoſe:
As Zopir's hoſtage he may find occaſion
To ſpeak with him, and ſoon avenge his maſter.
Thy other fav'rites are too wiſe, too prudent

For

For ſuch a dang'rous enterprize; old age
Takes off the bandage of credulity
From mortal eyes; but the young ſimple heart,
The willing ſlave to its own fond opinions,
And void of guile, will act as we direct it:
Youth is the proper period for deluſion.
Seid, thou know'ſt, is ſuperſtitious, bold,
And violent, but eaſy to be led;
Like a tame lion, to his keeper's voice
Obedient.

MAHOMET.

What! the brother of Palmira?

OMAR.

Ay; Seid, the fierce ſon of thy proud foe,
Th'inceſtuous rival of great Mahomet,
His maſter's rival.

MAHOMET.

I deteſt him, Omar,
Abhor his very name; my murther'd ſon
Crys out for vengeance on him; but thou know'ſt
The object of my love, and whence ſhe ſprung;
Thou ſee'ſt I am oppreſs'd on ev'ry ſide;
I wou'd have altars, victims, and a throne;
I wou'd have Zopir's blood, and Seid's too:
I muſt conſult my int'reſt, my revenge,

My

My honour, and my love, that fatal paſſion,
Which, ſpite of my reſentment, holds this heart
In ſhameful chains: I muſt conſult religion,
All pow'rful motive, and neceſſity
That throws a veil o'er ev'ry crime—away.

END of the SECOND ACT.

ACT III. SCENE I.

SEID, PALMIRA.

PALMIRA.

O Seid, keep me not in dread ſuſpenſe,
What is this ſecret ſacrifice? what blood
Hath heav'n demanded?

SEID.

The eternal pow'r
Deigns to accept my ſervice, calls on me
To execute its purpoſes divine;
To him this heart's devoted, and for him
This arm ſhall riſe in vengeance; I am bound
To Omar and to Mahomet, have ſworn
To periſh in the glorious cauſe of heav'n:
My next and deareſt care ſhall be Palmira.

PAL-

PALMIRA.

Why was not I a witneſs to thy oath?
Had I been with thee, I had been leſs wretched;
But doubts diſtract me: Omar talks of treaſon,
Of blood that ſoon muſt flow; the ſenate's rage,
And Zopir's dark intrigues: the flames of war
Once more are kindled, and the ſword is drawn
Heav'n only knows when to be ſheath'd again:
So ſays our prophet, he who cannot lye,
Cannot deceive us: O I fear for Seid,
Fear all from Zopir.

SEID.

Can he have a heart
So baſe and ſo perfidious? but this morning,
When as an hoſtage I appear'd before him,
I thought him noble, gen'rous, and humane;
Some pow'r invincible in ſecret work'd,
And won me to him; whether the reſpect
Due to his name, or ſpecious form external
Conceal'd the blackneſs of his heart I know not;
Whether thy preſence fill'd my raptur'd ſoul
With joy that drove out ev'ry painful ſenſe,
And wou'd not let me think on aught but thee:
Whate'er the cauſe, methought I was moſt happy
When neareſt him: that he ſhou'd thus ſeduce

My

My eaſy heart makes me deteſt him more;
And yet how hard it is to look on thoſe
With eyes of hatred whom we wiſh to love!

PALMIRA.

By ev'ry bond hath heav'n united us,
And Seid and Palmira are the ſame:
Were I not bound to thee, and to that faith
Which Mahomet inſpires, I too had pleaded
The cauſe of Zopir; but religion, love,
And nature, all forbid it.

SEID.

Think no more
Of vain remorſe, but liſten to the voice
Of heav'n, the God we ſerve will be propitious:
Our holy prophet who protects his children
Will bleſs our faithful love: for thy dear ſake
I hazard all. Farewell.

SCENE II.

PALMIRA alone.

Some dark preſage
Of future miſery hangs o'er me ſtill:
That love which made my happineſs, this day,
So often wiſh'd for, is a day of horror:
What is this dreadful oath, this ſolemn compact

Which

Which Seid talks of? I've a thouſand fears.
Upon me when I think of Zopir: oft
As I invoke great Mahomet, I feel
A ſecret dread, and tremble as I worſhip:
O ſave me, heaven! fearful I obey,
And blind I follow: O direct my ſteps
Aright, and deign to waſh my tears away!

SCENE III.

MAHOMET, PALMIRA.

PALMIRA.

Propitious heav'n hath heard my pray'rs; he comes,
The prophet comes. O gracious Mahomet,
My Seid——

MAHOMET.

What of him? thou ſeem'ſt diſturb'd;
What ſhou'd Palmira fear when I am with her!

PALMIRA.

Have I not cauſe when Mahomet himſelf
Seems touch'd with grief?

MAHOMET.

Perhaps it is for thee:
Dar'ſt thou, imprudent maid, avow a paſſion
E'er I approv'd it: is the heart I form'd
Turn'd rebel to its maſter, to my laws
Unfaithful? O ingratitude!

PAL-

PALMIRA.

My Lord,
Behold me at your feet, and pity me:
Did'ſt thou not once propitious ſmile upon us,
And give thy ſanction to our growing love?
Thou know'ſt the virtuous paſſion that unites us
Is but a chain that binds us more to thee.

MAHOMET.

The bonds that folly and imprudence knit
Are dang'rous; guilt doth ſometimes follow cloſe
The ſteps of innocence: our hearts deceive us,
And love, with all his ſtore of dear delights,
May coſt us tears, and dip his ſhafts in blood.

PALMIRA.

Nor wou'd I murmur if it flow'd for Seid.

MAHOMET.

Are you indeed ſo fond?

PALMIRA.

E'er ſince the day
When good Hercides to thy ſacred pow'r
Conſign'd us both, unconquerable inſtinct,
Still growing with our years, united us
In tender friendſhip; 'twas the work of heav'n
That guides our ev'ry action, and oe'r-rules

The

The fate of mortals; ſo thy doctrines teach:
God cannot change, nor gracious heav'n condemn
That love itſelf inſpir'd: what once was right
Is always ſo; can'ſt thou then blame Palmira?

MAHOMET.

I can, and muſt; nay, thou wilt tremble more
When I reveal the horrid ſecret to thee.
Attend, raſh maid, and let me teach thy ſoul
What to avoid, and what to follow: liſten
To me alone.

PALMIRA.

To thee alone Palmira
Will liſten ever, the obedient ſlave
Of Mahomet; this heart can never loſe
Its veneration for thy ſacred name.

MAHOMET.

That veneration in exceſs may lead
To foul ingratitude.

PALMIRA.

When I forget
Thy goodneſs, then may Seid puniſh me!

MAHOMET.

Seid!

PAL-

PALMIRA.

O why, my lord, that cruel frown,
And look ſevere?

MAHOMET.

Be not alarm'd; I meant
But to explore the ſecrets of thy heart,
And try if thou wert worthy to be ſav'd:
Be confident, and reſt on my protection;
On your obedience will depend your fate;
If ye expect a bleſſing at my hands,
Be careful to deſerve it, and whate'er
The will of heav'n determines touching Seid,
Be thou his guide, direct him in the paths
Of duty, and religion; let him keep
His promiſe, and be worthy of Palmira.

PALMIRA.

O he will keep it; doubt him not, my lord,
I'll anſwer for his heart as for my own;
Seid adores thee, worſhips Mahomet
More than he loves Palmira; thou art all
To him, his friend, his father, and his king:
I'll fly, and urge him to his duty.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

MAHOMET alone.

Well:
Spite of myſelf I muſt, it ſeems, be made
A confident; the ſimple girl betray'd
Her guilty flame, and innocently plung'd
The dagger in my heart: unhappy race!
Father, and children, all my foes, all doom'd
To make me wretched! but ye ſoon ſhall prove
That dreadful is my hatred,---and my love.

SCENE V.

MAHOMET, OMAR.

OMAR.

At length the hour is come, to ſeize Palmira,
To conquer Mecca, and to puniſh Zopir;
His death alone can prop our feeble cauſe,
And humble theſe proud citizens: brave Seid
Can beſt revenge thee; he has free acceſs
To Zopir: yonder gloomy paſſage leads
To his abode; there the rebellious chief
His idle vows and flatt'ring incenſe pours
Before his fancy'd deities; there Seid,
Full of the law divine by thee inſpir'd,

Shall

Shall ſacrifice the traitor to the God
Of Mahomet.

MAHOMET.

He ſhall: that youth was born
For crimes of deepeſt die: he ſhall be firſt
My uſeful ſlave, my inſtrument, and then
The victim of my rage; it muſt be ſo:
My ſafety, my reſentment, and my love,
My holy faith, and the decrees of fate
Irrevocable, all require it of me:
But think'ſt thou, Omar, he hath all the warmth
Of wild fanaticiſm?

OMAR.

I know he has,
And ſuits our purpoſe well; Palmira too
Will urge him on; religion, love, reſentment
Will blind his headſtrong youth, and hurry him
To madneſs.

MAHOMET.

Haſt thou bound him by an oath?

OMAR.

O yes; in all the gloomy pomp of rites
Nocturnal, oaths, and altars, we have fix'd
His ſuperſtitious ſoul, plac'd in his hand

The

The ſacred ſword, and fir'd him with the rage
Of fierce enthuſiaſm---but behold him.

SCENE VI.

MAHOMEE, OMAR, SEID.

MAHOMET.

Child
Of heav'n, decree'd to execute the laws
Of an offended God, now hear by me
His ſacred will: thou muſt avenge his cauſe.

SEID.

O thou, to whom my ſoul devoted bends
In humbleſt adoration, king, and prophet,
Sov'reign acknowledg'd by the voice of heav'n
O'er proſtrate nations---I am wholly thine:
But O enlighten my dark mind, O ſay,
How can weak man avenge his God?

MAHOMET.

Oft-times
Doth he make uſe of feeble hands like thine
To puniſh impious mortals, and aſſert
His pow'r divine.

SEID.

SEID.

Will he, whoſe perfect image
Is ſeen in Mahomet, thus condeſcend
To honour Seid?

MAHOMET.

Do as he ordains;
That is the higheſt honour man can boaſt
Blindly to execute his great decree:
Be thankful for the choice, and ſtrike the blow:
The angel of deſtruction ſhall aſſiſt,
The God of armies ſhall protect thee.

SEID.

Speak;
What tyrant muſt be ſlain? what blood muſt flow?

MAHOMET.

The murth'rer's blood whom Mahomet abhors,
Who perſecutes our faith, and ſpurns our God,
Who ſlew my ſon, the worſt of all my foes,
The cruel Zopir.

SEID.

Ha! muſt Zopir fall?

MAHOMET.

And doſt thou pauſe? preſumptuous youth! 'tis impious
But to delib'rate: far from Mahomet

Be all who for themſelves ſhall dare to judge
Audacious; thoſe who reaſon are not oft
Prone to believe; their part is to obey.
Have I not told thee what the will of heav'n
Determin'd? 'Tis decreed that Mecca,
Spite of her errors and baſe idolatry,
Shall be the promis'd temple, the chos'n ſeat
Of empire, where I am appointed king,
And Pontiff, know'ſt thou why our Mecca boaſts
Theſe honours? know'ſt thou holy Abram here
Was born, that here his ſacred aſhes reſt?
He who, obedient to the voice of God,
Stifled the cries of nature, and gave up
His darling child: the ſame all pow'rful being
Requires of thee a ſacrifice, to thee
He calls for blood; and dar'ſt thou heſitate
When God commands? hence, vile idolater,
Unworthy Muſulman, away, and ſeek
Another maſter; go, and love Palmira;
But thou deſpiſeſt her, and brav'ſt the wrath
Of angry heav'n; away, forſake thy lord,
And ſerve his deadlieſt foes.

---

* The Muſulmans are perſuaded that the tomb of Abraham is at Mecca.

SEID.

SEID.

It is the voice
Of God that ſpeaks in Mahomet: — command,
And I obey.

MAHOMET.

Strike then, and by the blood
Of Zopir merit life eternal.—Omar,
Attend and watch him well.

SCENE VII.

SEID alone.

To ſacrifice
A poor defenceleſs weak old man! — no matter:
How many victims at the altar fall
As helpleſs! yet their blood in grateful ſtreams
Riſes to heav'n: God hath appointed me;
Seid hath ſworn, and Seid ſhall perform
His ſacred promiſe: — O aſſiſt me now
Illuſtrious ſpirits, you who have deſtroy'd
The tyrants of the earth, O join your rage
To mine, O guide this trembling hand, and thou
Exterminating angel, who defend'ſt
The cauſe of Mahomet, inſpire this heart
With all thy fierceneſs! — ha! what do I ſee?

SCENE

SCENE VIII.

ZOPIR, SEID.

ZOPIR.

Seid, thou ſeem'ſt diſturb'd; unhappy youth!
Why art thou rank'd amongſt my foes? my heart
Feels for thy woes, and trembles at thy danger;
Horrors on horrors croud on every ſide;
My houſe may be a ſhelter from the ſtorm,
Accept it, thou art welcome, for thy life
Is dear to Zopir.

SEID.

Gracious heav'n! wilt thou
Protect me thus? will Zopir guard his foe?
What do I hear! O duty, conſcience, virtue!
O Mahomet, this rives my heart.

ZOPIR.

Perhaps
Thou art ſurpris'd to find that I can pity
An enemy, and wiſh for Seid's welfare;
I am a man like thee, that tie alone
Demands at leaſt a ſympathetic tear
For innocence afflicted: gracious gods,
Drive from this earth thoſe baſe and ſavage men,
Who ſhed with joy their fellow-creatures blood.

SEID.

O glorious ſentiments! and can there be
Such virtue in an infidel?

ZOPIR.

Thou know'ſt
But little of that virtue thus to ſtand
Aſtoniſh'd at it! O miſtaken youth,
In what a maze of errors art thou loſt!
Bound by a tyrant's ſavage laws, thou think'ſt
Virtue reſides in Muſulmen alone;
Thy maſter rules thee with a rod of iron,
And ſhackles thy free ſoul in ſhameful bonds;
Zopir thou hat'ſt, alas! thou know'ſt him not:
I pardon thee becauſe thou art the ſlave
Of Mahomet; but how can'ſt thou believe
A God who teaches hatred, and delights
In diſcord?

SEID.

O I never can obey him;
I know, and feel I cannot hate thee, Zopir.

ZOPIR.

Alas! the more I talk to him, the more
He gains upon me; his ingenuous look,
His youth, his candor, all conſpire to charm me:

How

How cou'd a follower of this vile impoſter
Thus win my heart! who gave thee birth? what art thou?

SEID.

A wretched Orphan; all I have on earth
Is a kind maſter, whom I never yet
Have diſobey'd; howe'er my love for thee
May tempt me to betray him.

ZOPIR.

Know'ſt thou not
Thy parents then?

SEID.

His camp was the firſt object
My eyes beheld; his temple is my country;
I know no other; and amid'ſt the croud
Of yearly tributes to our holy prophet,
None e'er was treated with more tenderneſs
Than Seid was.

ZOPHER.

I love his gratitude:
Thy kind return for benefits receiv'd
Merits my praiſe: — O why did heav'n employ
The hand of Mahomet in ſuch an office?
He was thy father, and Palmira's too;
Why doſt thou ſigh? why doſt thou tremble thus?

Why turn thee from me? ſure ſome dreadful thought
Hangs on thy mind,

SEID.

It muſt be ſo: the times
Are full of terror.

ZOPIR.

If thou feel'ſt remorſe
Thy heart is guiltleſs; murther is abroad,
Let me preſerve thy life.

SEID.

O gracious heav'n!
And can I have a thought of taking thine?
Palmira! O my oath! O God of vengeance!

ZOPIR.

For the laſt time remember I intreat thee
To follow me; away, thy fate depends
Upon this moment.

SCENE IX.

ZOPIR, SEID, OMAR.

OMAR. [Entering haſtily.

Traitor, Mahomet
Expects thee.

SEID.

O I know not where or what
I am; deſtruction, ruin, and deſpair

On

On ev'ry ſide await me: whither now
Shall wretched Seid fly?

OMAR.

To him whom God
Hath chos'n, thy injur'd king, and maſter.

SEID.

Yes:
And there abjure the dreadful oath I made.

SCENE X.

ZOPIR alone.

The deſp'rate youth is gone — I know not why,
But my heart beats for his diſtreſs; his looks,
His pity, his remorſe, his ev'ry action
Affect me deeply: I muſt follow him.

SCENE XI.

ZOPIR, PHANOR.

PHANOR.

This letter, ſir, was by an Arab giv'n
In ſecret to me.

ZOPIR.

From Hercides! gods,
What do I read? will heav'n in tend'reſt pity
At length repay me for a life of ſorrows?
Hercides begs to ſee me — he who ſnatch'd
From this fond boſom my two helpleſs children;

They yet are living, ſo this paper tells me,
Slaves to the tyrant — Seid and Palmira
Are orphans both, and know not whence they ſprang,
Perhaps my children — O deluſive hope,
Why wilt thou flatter me? it cannot be;
Fain wou'd I credit thee, thou ſweet deceiver:
I fly to meet and to embrace my children;
Yes; I will ſee Hercides: let him come
At midnight to me, to this holy altar,
Where I ſo often have invok'd the gods
At laſt perhaps propitious to my vows:
O ye immortal pow'rs, reſtore my children,
Give back to virtue's paths two generous hearts
Corrupted by an impious vile uſurper!
If Seid and Palmira are not mine,
If ſuch is my hard fate, I will adopt
The noble pair, and be their father ſtill.

END of the THIRD ACT.

ACT

ACT IV. SCENE I.

MAHOMET, OMAR.

OMAR.

MY lord, our ſecret is diſcover'd; Seid
Has told Hercides; we are on the verge
Of ruin, yet I know he will obey.

MAHOMET.

Reveal'd it, ſay'ſt thou?

OMAR.

Yes: Hercides loves him
With tenderneſs.

MAHOMET.

Indeed! what ſaid he to it?

HOMAR.

He ſtood aghaſt, and ſeem'd to pity Zopir.

MAHOMET.

He's weak, and therefore not to be entruſted;
Fools ever will be traitors: but no matter,
Let him take heed; a method may be found
To rid us of ſuch dang'rous witneſſes:
Say, Omar, have my orders been obey'd?

OMAR.

They have, my lord.

MAHOMET.

'Tis well: remember, Omar,
In one important hour of Mahomet
Or Zopir is no more; if Zopir dies,
The cred'lous people will adore that God
Who thus declar'd for me, and ſav'd his prophet:
Be this our firſt great object; that once done,
Take care of Seid; art thou ſure the poiſon
Will do its office?

OMAR.

Fear it not, my lord,

MAHOMET.

O we muſt work in ſecret, the dark ſhades
Of death muſt hide our purpoſe — whilſt we ſhed
Old Zopir's blood, be ſure you keep Palmira
In deepeſt ignorance; ſhe muſt not know
The ſecret of her birth: her bliſs and mine
Depend upon it; well thou know'ſt, my triumphs
From error's fruitful ſource inceſſant flow:
The ties of blood, and all their boaſted pow'r
Are mere deluſions: what are nature's bonds?
Nothing but habit, the mere force of cuſtom:
Palmira knows no duty but obedience
To me; I am her lord, her king, her father,
Perhaps may add the name of huſband to them:

Her little heart will beat with proud ambition
To captivate her maſter — but the hour
Approaches that muſt rid me of my foe,
The hated Zopir: Seid is prepar'd —
And ſee, he comes: let us retire.

OMAR.

Obſerve
His wild demeanor; rage and fierce reſentment
Poſſeſs his ſoul.

SCENE II.

MAHOMET and OMAR. retir'd to one ſide of the ſtage, SEID at the further end.

SEID.

This dreadful duty then
Muſt be fulfill'd.

MAHOMET. [To Omar.

Let us begone, in ſearch
Of other means to make our pow'r ſecure.

[Exit with Omar.

SEID alone.

I cou'd not anſwer: one reproachful word
From Mahomet ſuffic'd: I ſtood abaſh'd,
But not convinc'd: if heav'n requires it of me,
I muſt obey; but it will coſt me dear.

SCENE III.

SEID, PALMIRA.

SEID.

Palmira, art thou here; what fatal cauſe
Hath led thee to this ſeat of horror?

PALMIRA.

Fear
And love directed me to find thee, Seid,
To aſk thee what dread ſacrifice thou mean'ſt
To offer here; do heav'n and Mahomet
Demand it of thee, muſt it be? O ſpeak.

SEID.

Palmira, thou command'ſt my ev'ry thought
And ev'ry action; all depend on thee:
Direct 'em as thou wilt, inform my ſoul,
And guide my hand: be thou my guardian God,
Explain the will of heav'n which yet I know not;
Why am I chos'n to be its inſtrument
Of vengeance? are the prophet's dread commands
Irrevocable?

PALMIRA,

Seid, we muſt yield in ſilence,
Nor dare to queſtion his decrees; he hears
Our ſecret ſighs, nor are our ſorrows hid
From Mahomet's all ſeeing eye: to doubt

Is

Is prophanation of the deity.
His God is God alone; he cou'd not elſe
Be thus victorious, thus invincible.

SEID.

He muſt be Seid's God who is Palmira's:
Yet cannot my aſtoniſh'd ſoul conceive
A being, tender, merciful, and kind,
Commanding murther; then again I think
To doubt is guilt: the prieſt without remorſe
Deſtroys the victim: by the voice of heav'n
I know that Zopir was condemn'd, I know
That Seid was predeſtin'd to ſupport
The law divine: ſo Mahomet ordain'd,
And I obey him; fir'd with holy zeal
I go to ſlay the enemy of God;
And yet methinks another deity
Draws back my arm, and bids me ſpare the victim:
Religion loſt her pow'r when I beheld
The wretched Zopir; duty urg'd in vain
Her cruel plea, exhorting me to murther;
With joy I liſten'd to the plaintive voice
Of ſoft humanity: but Mahomet —
How awful! how majeſtic! who can bear
His wrath? his frowns reproach'd my ſhameful weakneſs;

Religion

Religion is a dreadful pow'r: alas!
Palmira, I am loſt in doubts and fears,
Diſcordant paſſions tear this feeble heart:
I muſt be impious, muſt deſert my faith,
Or be a murth'rer: Seid was not form'd
For an Aſſaſſin; but 'tis heavn's command,
And I have promis'd to avenge its cauſe:
The tears of grief and rage united flow,
Contending duties raiſe a ſtorm within,
And thou alone, Palmira, muſt appeaſe it;
Fix my uncertain heart, and give it peace:
Alas! without this dreadful ſacrifice,
The tie that binds us is for ever broke;
This only can ſecure thee.

PALMIRA.

Am I then
The price of blood, of Zopir's blood?

SEID.

So heav'n
And Mahomet decree.

PALMIRA.

Love ne'er was meant
To make us cruel, barb'rous, and inhuman.

SEID.

To Zopir's murth'rer, and to him alone,
Palmira muſt be giv'n.

PALMIRA.

PALMIRA.

O hard condition!

SEID.

But 'tis the will of Mahomet and heav'n.

PALMIRA.

Alas!

SEID.

Thou know'ſt the dreadful curſe that waits
On diſobedience, everlaſting pain.

PALMIRA.

If thou muſt be the inſtrument of vengeance,
If at thy hands the blood which thou haſt promis'd
Shall be requir'd —

SEID.

What's to be done?

PALMIRA.

I tremble
To think o'nt—yet—

SEID.

It muſt be ſo then: thou
Haſt fix'd his doom; Palmira has conſented.

PALMIRA.

Did I conſent?

SEID.

Thou didſt.

PALMIRA.

PALMIRA.

Deteſted thought!
What have I ſaid?

SEID.

By thee the voice of heav'n
Speaks its laſt dread command, and I obey:
Yon fatal altar is the choſen ſeat
Of Zopir's worſhip, there he bends the knee
To his falſe gods; retire, my ſweet Palmira.

PALMIRA.

I can not leave thee.

SEID.

Thou muſt not be witneſs
To ſuch a deed of horror: theſe, Palmira,
Are dreadful moments: fly to yonder grove,
Thou wilt be near the prophet there: away.

PALMIRA.

Zopir muſt die then?

SEID.

Yes: this fated hand
Muſt drag him to the earth, there murther him,
And bathe yon ruin'd altar in his blood.

PALMIRA.

Die by thy hand! I ſhudder at the thought:
But ſee! he comes; juſt heav'n!

[The

[The farther part of the ſtage opens, and diſcovers an altar.]

ZOPIR, SEID, PALMIRA, on one ſide.

ZOPIR, ſtanding near the altar.

Ye guardian gods
Of Mecca, threaten'd by an impious ſect
Of vile impoſtors, now aſſert your pow'r,
And let your Zopir's pray'rs, perhaps the laſt
He e'er ſhall make, be heard! the feeble bonds
Of our ſhort peace are broken, and fierce war.
Vindictive rages; O if ye ſupport
The cauſe of this uſurper.—

SEID. [Aſide to Palmira.

Hear, Palmira,
How he blaſphemes!

ZOPIR.

May death be Zopir's lot!
I wiſh for nought on earth but to behold,
In my laſt hour, and to embrace my children,
To die in their lov'd arms: if yet they live,
If they are here, for ſomething whiſpers me
That I ſhall ſee 'em ſtill.

PALMIRA. [Aſide to Seid.

His children, ſaid he?

ZOPIR.

ZOPIR.

O I ſhou'd die with pleaſure at the ſight:
Watch over and protect them, ye kind gods,
O let 'em think like me, but not like me
Be wretched!

SEID.

See! he prays to his falſe gods:
This is the time to end him.

[Draws his ſword.

PALMIRA.

Do not, Seid.

SEID.

To ſerve my God, to pleaſe and merit thee,
This ſword, devoted to the cauſe of heav'n,
Is drawn, and ſhall deſtroy its deadlieſt foe:
Yon dreary walk invites me to the deed,
Methinks the path is bloody, wand'ring ghoſts
Glide thro' the ſhade, and beckon me away.

PALMIRA.

What ſay'ſt thou, Seid?

SEID.

Miniſters of death,
I follow you; conduct me to the altar,
And guide my trembling hand!

PALMIRA.

PALMIRA.

It muſt not be;
'Tis horrible: O ſtop, my Seid.

SEID.

No:
The hour is come, and ſee! the altar ſhakes.

PALMIRA.

'Tis heavn's aſſent, and we muſt doubt no more.

SEID.

Means it to urge me on, or to reſtrain?
Our prophet will reproach me for this weakneſs:
Palmira!

PALMIRA.

Well!

SEID.

Addreſs thyſelf to heav'n;
I go to do the deed.

[He goes behind the altar where Zopir is retired.

PALMIRA alone.

O dreadful moment!
What do I feel within! my blood runs cold:
And yet if heav'n demands the ſacrifice,
Am I to judge, to aſk, or to complain?
Where is the heart that knows itſelf, that knows
Its innocence or guilt? We muſt obey:
But hark! methought I heard the plaintive voice

Of

Of death; the deed is done — alas! my Seid

SEID. [Returns looking wildly.

What voice was that? where am I? where's Palmira?
I cannot ſee Palmira; O ſhe's gone,
She's loſt for ever.

PALMIRA.

Art thou blind to her
Who only lives for thee?

SEID.

Where are we?

PALMIRA.

Speak,
My Seid, is the dreadful ſacrifice
Perform'd, and thy ſad promiſe all fulfill'd?

SEID.

What ſay'ſt thou?

PALMIRA.

Zopir? is he dead?

SEID.

Who? Zopir?

PALMIRA.

Good heav'n, preſerve his ſenſes! — come, my Seid,
Let us be gone.

SEID.

How will theſe tott'ring limbs
Support me! — I recover — is it you,
Palmira?

PAL-

PALMIRA.

Yes: what haſt thou done?

SEID.

Obey'd
The voice of heav'n, ſeis'd with this deſp'rate hand
His ſilver hairs, and dragg'd him to the earth:
'Twas thy command: O God! thou coud'ſt not bid me
Commit a crime! trembling and pale a while
I ſtood aghaſt, then drew this ſacred ſword,
And plung'd it in his boſom: what a look
Of tenderneſs and love the poor old man
Caſt on his murtherer! a ſcene ſo mournful
Ne'er did theſe eyes behold; my heart retains
And will for ever keep the ſad idea:
Wou'd I were dead like him!

PALMIRA.

Let us repair
To Mahomet, the prophet will protect us;
Here you're in danger; follow me.

SEID.

I cannot:
Palmira, pity me.

PALMIRA.

What mournful thought
Can thus depreſs thee?

SEID.

SEID.

O if thou had'ſt ſeen
His tender looks, when from his bleeding ſide
He drew the fatal weapon forth, and cry'd,
Dear Seid, poor unhappy Seid! Oh
That voice, thoſe looks, and Zopir at my feet
Welt'ring in blood are ſtill before my eyes:
What have we done?

PALMIRA.

I tremble for thy life:
O, in the name of all the ſacred ties
That bind us, fly, and ſave thyſelf.

SEID.

Away,
And leave me: why did thy ill-fated love
Command this dreadful ſacrifice, Palmira?
Without thy cruel order heav'n itſelf
Had never been obey'd.

PALMIRA.

Unkind reproach!
Coud'ſt thou but know what thy Palmira ſuffers
How woud'ſt thou pity her!

SEID.

SEID.

What dreadful object

Is that before us?

[Zopir riſes up ſlowly from behind the altar, and leans upon it.

PALMIRA.

'Tis the murther'd Zopir;

Bloody and pale he drags his mangled limbs

Towards us.

SEID.

Wilt thou go to him?

PALMIRA.

I muſt;

For pity and remorſe diſtract my ſoul,

And draw me to him.

ZOPIR. [Comes forward leaning on Palmira.

Gentle maid, ſupport me!

[He ſits down.

Ungrateful Seid, thou haſt ſlain me; now

Thou weep'ſt; alas! too late.

SCENE V.

ZOPIR, SEID, PALMIRA, PHANOR.

PHANOR.

O dreadful ſight!

What's here?

ZOPIR.

ZOPIR.

I wiſh I cou'd have ſeen my friend
Hercides— Phanor, art thou there? — behold
My murtherer.

[Points to Seid.

PHANOR.

O guilt! accurſed deed!
Unhappy Seid, look upon — thy father.

SEID.

Who?

PALMIRA.

He?

SEID.

My father?

ZOPIR.

Gracious heav'n!

PHANOR.

Hercides
In his laſt moments took me in his arms,
And weeping cry'd, if there be time, O haſte
Prevent a parricide, and ſtop the arm
Of Seid; in my breaſt the tyrant lodg'd
The dreadful ſecret; now I ſuffer for it,
And die by Mahomet's deteſted hand:
Haſte, Phanor, fly, inform the hapleſs Zopir,
That Seid and Palmira are—his children.

SEID.

Palmira!

PAL-

PALMIRA.

Thou my brother?

ZOPIR.

O ye gods!

O nature, thou haſt not deceiv'd me then,
When thou didſt plead for them! unhappy Seid,
What cou'd have urg'd thee to ſo foul a deed?

SEID. [Kneeling.

My gratitude, my duty, my religion,
All that mankind hold ſacred, urg'd me on
To do the worſt of actions:---give me back
That fatal weapon.

PALMIRA. [Laying hold of Seid's arm.

Plunge it in my breaſt;
I was the cauſe of my dear father's murther;
And inceſt is the price of parricide:

SEID.

Strike both: heav'n hath not puniſhment enough
For crimes like ours.

ZOPIR. [embracing them.

Let me embrace my children:
The gods have pour'd into my cup of ſorrow
A draught of ſweateſt happineſs: I die,
Contented, and reſign me to my fate:

But

But you muſt live, my children; you, my Seid,
And you, Palmira, by the ſacred name
Of nature, by thy dying father's blood,
Faſt flowing from the wound which thou haſt made,
Let me intreat you, live; revenge yourſelves,
Revenge the injur'd Zopir, but preſerve
Your precious lives; the great th' important hour
Approaches, that muſt change the mournful ſcene:
Th'offended people, e'er to-morrow's dawn,
Will riſe in arms and puniſh the uſurper;
My blood will add freſh fuel to their rage;
Let us await the iſſue.

SEID.

O I fly
To ſacrifice the monſter, to take vengeance
For a dear father's life, or loſe my own.

SCENE VI.

ZOPIR, SEID, PALMIRA, OMAR, Attendants.

OMAR.

Guards, ſeize the murth'rer; Mahomet is come
To puniſh guilt, and execute the laws.

ZOPIR.

What do I hear?

SEID.

SEID.

Did Mahomet command thee
To puniſh Seid?

PALMIRA.

Execrable tyrant!
Was not the murther done by thy command?

OMAR.

'Twas not commaded.

SEID.

Well have I deſerv'd
This juſt reward of my credulity.

OMAR.

Soldiers, obey.

PALMIRA.

O ſtop, ye ſhall not ——

OMAR.

Madam,
If Seid's life is dear to you, ſubmit
With patience, leſt the prophet's anger fall
Like thunder on your head; if you obey,
Great Mahomet is able to protect you:
Guards, lead her to the king.

PALMIRA.

O take me, death,
From this ſad ſcene of never-ending woe!

[Seid and Palmira are carry'd off.]

ZOPIR. [to Phanor

They're gone, they're loſt: O moſt unhappy father,
The wound which Seid gave is not ſo deep,
So painful as this parting.

PHANOR.

See, my lord,
The day appears, and the arm'd multitudes
Preſs onward to defend the cauſe of Zopir.

ZOPIR.

Support me, Phanor: yet thy friend may live
To puniſh this vile hypocrite; at leaſt
In death may ſerve my dear—my cruel—children.

END of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT V. SCENE I.

MAHOMET, OMAR, Guards at a diſtance.

OMAR,

ZOPIR's approaching death alarms the people,
We have endeavour'd to appeaſe their clamours,
And diſavow'd all knowledge of the deed;
To ſome, we call'd it the avenging hand

Of

Of heav'n that favours thus its prophet's cauſe:
With others, we lament his fall, and boaſt
Thy awful juſtice that will ſoon avenge it.
The croud attentive liſten to thy praiſe,
And all the danger of the ſtorm is o'er;
If ought remains of buſy faction's rage
It is but as the toſſing of the waves
After the tempeſt, when the vault of heav'n
Is placid and ſerene.

MAHOMET.

Be it our care
To keep it ſo: where are my valiant bands?

OMAR.

All ready; Oſman in the dead of night
By ſecret paths conducted them to Mecca.

MAHOMET.

'Tis ſtrange that men muſt either be deceiv'd
Or forc'd into obedience: Seid knows not
It is a father's blood that he muſt ſhed?

OMAR.

Who cou'd inform him of it? he alone
Who knew the ſecret is no more; Hercides
Is gone, and Seid ſoon ſhall follow him;
For know, he has already drank the poiſon;

His crime was puniſh'd e'er it was committed:
Ev'n whilſt he dragg'd his father to the altar
Death lurk'd within his veins; he cannot live:
Palmira too is ſafe; ſhe may be uſeful:
I've giv'n her hopes of Seid's pardon, that
May win her to our cauſe; ſhe dare not murmur,
Beſides, her heart is flexible and ſoft,
Form'd to obey, to worſhip Mahomet,
And make him ſoon the happieſt of mankind:
Trembling and pale behold they bring her to thee.

MAHOMET.

Collect my forces, Omar, and return.

SCENE II.

MAOMET, PALMIRA, Guards.

PALMIRA.

O heav'n! where am I? gracious God!

MAHOMET.

Palmira,

Be not alarm'd; already I have fix'd
Thy fate and Mecca's: know, the great event
That fills thy ſoul with horror is a myſt'ry
'Twixt heav'n and me that's not to be reveal'd:
But thou art free, and happy: think no more

Of

Of Seid, nor lament him; leave to me
The fate of men, be thankful for thy own:
Thou know'ſt that Mahomet hath lov'd thee long,
That I have ever been a father to thee;
Perhaps a nobler fate, and fairer title
May grace thee ſtill, if thou deſerv'ſt it; therefore
Blot from thy memory the name of Seid,
And let thy ſoul aſpire to greater bleſſings
That it could dare to hope for; let thy heart
Be my laſt nobleſt victory, and join
The conquer'd world to own me for its maſter.

PALMIRA.

What joys, what bleſſings, or what happineſs
Can I expect from thee, thou vile impoſtor?
Thou bloody ſavage! This alone was wanting,
This cruel inſult to complete my woes:
Eternal father, look upon this king,
This holy prophet, this all-pow'rful God
Whom I ador'd: thou monſter, to betray
Two guiltleſs hearts into the crying ſin
Of parricide; thou infamous ſeducer
Of my unguarded youth, how dar'ſt thou think,
Stain'd as thou art with my dear father's blood,
To gain Palmira's heart? but know, proud tyrant,
Thou art nót yet invincible: the veil

Is off that hid thee, and the hand of vengeance
Uprais'd to ſcourge thy guilt: doſt thou not hear
The madd'ning multitude already arm'd
In the defence of injur'd innocence?
From death's dark ſhades my murther'd father comes
To lead them on: O that theſe feeble hands
Cou'd tear thee piece-meal, thee and all thy train!
Wou'd I cou'd ſee them welt'ring in their blood;
See Mecca, and Medina, Aſia, all
Combin'd againſt thee! that the credulous world
Wou'd ſhake off thy vile chains, and thy religion
Become the jeſt and ſcorn of all mankind
To after ages! may that hell, whoſe threats
Thou haſt ſo oft denounc'd 'gainſt all who dar'd
To doubt thy falſe divinity, now open
Her fiery gates, and be thy juſt reward!
Theſe are the thanks I owe thee for thy bounties,
And theſe the pray'rs I make for Mahomet.

MAHOMET.

I ſee I am betray'd; but be it ſo:
Whoe'er thou art, learn henceforth to obey;
For know, my heart ——

SCENE

SCENE III.

MAHOMET, PALMIRA, OMAR, ALI, Attendants.

OMAR.

The ſecret is reveal'd;
Hercides told it in his dying moments:
The people all enrag'd have forc'd the priſon:
They're up in arms, and bearing on their ſhoulders
The bloody corpſe of their unhappy chief,
Lament his fate, and cry aloud for vengeance:
All is confuſion: Seid at their head
Excites them to rebellion, and cries out,
'I am a parricide;' with rage and grief
He ſeems diſtracted; with one voice the croud
Unite to curſe the prophet and his God:
Ev'n thoſe who promis'd to admit our forces
Within the walls of Mecca, have conſpir'd
With them to raiſe their deſp'rate arms againſt thee;
And nought is heard but cries of death and vengeance.

PALMIRA.

Juſt heav'n purſue him, and defend the cauſe
Of innocence!

MAHOMET. [to Omar.

Well, what have we to fear?

OMAR.

Omar, my lord, with your few faithful friends,
Deſpiſing danger, are prepar'd to brave
The furious ſtorm, and periſh at your feet.

MAHOMET.

Alone I will defend you all; come near:
Behold, and ſay I act like Mahomet.

SCENE IV.

MAHOMET, OMAR, and his party on one ſide, SEID, and the people on the other. PALMIRA, in the middle

SEID.

Revenge my father, ſeiſe the traitor.

MAHOMET.

People,
Born to obey me, liſten to your maſter.

SEID.

Hear not the monſter; follow me:

[He comes forward a little, and then ſtaggers.

O heav'n!
What ſudden darkneſs ſpreads o'er my dim eyes?
Now ſtrike, my friends — O I am dying.

MAHOMET.

Ha!
Then all is well.

PALMI-

PALMIRA.

My brother, can'ſt thou ſhed
No blood but Zopir's?

SEID.

Yes: come on — I cannot;
Some God unnerves me.

[He faints.

MAHOMET.

Hence let ev'ry foe
Of Mahomet be taught to fear and tremble:
Know, ye proud infidels, this hand alone
Hath pow'r to cruſh you all, to me the God
Of nature delegates his ſov'reign pow'r:
Acknowledge then his prophet, and his laws,
Twixt Mahomet and Seid let that God
Decide the conteſt, which of us ſoe'er
Is guilty, now, this moment let him periſh!

PALMIRA.

My brother — Seid — can this monſter boaſt
Such pow'r? the people ſtand aſtoniſh'd at him,
And tremble at his voice; and wilt thou yield
To Mahomet?

SEID. [Supported by his attendants.

Alas! the hand of heav'n
Is on me, and th' involuntary crime
Is too ſeverely puniſh'd: O Palmira

In vain was Seid virtuous: O if heav'n
Chaſtiſes thus our errors, what muſt crimes
Like thine expect, deteſted Mahomet?
What cauſe haſt thou to tremble — O I die;
Receive me, gracious heav'n, and ſpare Palmira.

PALMIRA. [Dies.

'Tis not, ye people, 'tis not angry heav'n
Purſues my Seid; No: he's poiſon'd —

MAHOMET. [Interrupting her, and addreſſing himſelf to the people.

Learn
From Seid's fate, ye unbelievers, how
To rev'rence Mahomet whom heav'n defends;
Nature and death, ye ſee, have heard my voice,
And this pale corpſe hath witneſs'd their obedience;
The ſword of fate hangs o'er your heads, beware
It fall not on you: thus will I reward
All impious rebels, all vile infidels,
And puniſh ev'ry word and thought againſt me.
If I withold my rage, and let you live,
Remember, traitors, that you owe your beings
To my indulgence; haſten to the temple,
Proſtrate yourſelves before the throne of grace,
And deprecate the wrath of Mahomet.

[The people retire.

PAL-

PALMIRA.

O ſtay, and hear me, people — the barbarian
Poiſon'd my brother — monſter, rais'd by crimes
To empire thus, and deify'd by guilt,
Thou murth'rer of Palmira's hapleſs race,
Complete thy work, and take my wretched life:
O my dear brother, let me follow thee!

[She ſeiſes her brother's ſword and ſtabs herſelf.

MAHOMET.

Seiſe, and prevent her —

PALMIRA.

'Tis too late; I die:
And dying hope a God more juſt than thine
Has yet in ſtore a ſtate of happineſs
For injur'd innocence: let Mahomet
Reign here in peace: this world was made for tyrants.

[Dies.

MAHOMET.

She's gone; ſhe's loſt; the only dear reward
I wiſh'd to keep of all my crimes: in vain
I fought, and conquer'd; Mahomet is wretched
Without Palmira: Conſcience, now I feel thee,
And feel that thou can'ſt rive the guilty heart.
O thou eternal God, whom I have made
The inſtrument of ill, whom I have wrong'd,

Brav'd,

Brav'd, and blaſphem'd; O thou whom yet I fear,
Behold me ſelf-condemn'd, behold me wretched,
Ev'n whilſt the world adores me: vain was all
My boaſted pow'r: I have deceiv'd mankind;
But how ſhall I impoſe on my own heart?
A murther'd father, and two guiltleſs children
Muſt be reveng'd: come ye unhappy victims,
And end me quickly! — Omar, we muſt ſtrive
To hide this ſhameful weakneſs, ſave my glory,
And let me reign o'er a deluded world:
For Mahomet depends on fraud alone,
And to be worſhipp'd never muſt be known.

END of the FIFTH and laſt ACT.

SOCRATES.

A

DRAMATIC PERFORMANCE.

BY

The late Mr. THOMSON.

A NEW EDITION.

Enlarged and Corrected from the Author's own Manuſcript.

*PREFACE.

BY

MR. FATIMA.

IT has been ſaid by one author, and repeated by another, that the ſimple repreſentation of a merely virtuous man, without paſſion or intrigue, cannot poſſibly meet with applauſe on the ſtage, which I look upon as an injurious reflection on human nature, and the falſehood of it ſufficiently prov'd by this performance, written by the late Mr. *Thomſon*. The famous Mr. *Addiſon* was a long time in doubt, whether he ſhou'd make *Socrates* or *Cato* the ſubject of his tragedy:

* What reaſons Mr. Voltaire might have for not acknowledging himſelf the author of *Socrates* on its firſt publication we cannot determine: thoſe amongſt our readers however, who have any acquaintance with the Engliſh ſtage, will eaſily perceive, that the whole ſtory in the preface about Addiſon, Thomſon, and lord Lyttleton, is nothing but pure fiction, deſign'd to conceal the real author of this motley performance.

he

he thought *Cato* a virtuous man, and as ſuch a proper object of imitation; but that *Socrates* was much ſuperior to him: the virtue of the latter, he obſerv'd, had more ſoftneſs and humanity in it, and was withal more reſigned to the will of God than that of the former: the *Grecian*, he us'd to ſay, did not, like the *Roman*, imagine that he was at liberty to deſtroy himſelf, or to quit the poſt which God had allotted to him: *Addiſon*, in ſhort, conſider'd *Cato* as the victim of liberty, and *Socrates* as the martyr of wiſdom. Sir *Richard Steele* however perſuaded him, that *Cato* was a ſubject better adapted to the theatre than the other, and at the ſame time likely to prove more agreeable to the nation, whilſt it was in a political ferment. To ſay the truth, the death of *Socrates* wou'd perhaps have made very little impreſſion in a country where no man is ever perſecuted on account of his religion; where a general toleration has ſo prodigiouſly enrich'd and peopled the community; as it has alſo in Holland, my dear native country. Sir *Richard Steele* ſays expreſsly in his *Tattler*, that the ſubject of a dramatic piece ſhou'd always be the reigning vice or foible of the nation where it is repreſented. The ſucceſs which Addiſon met with in his *Cato*, encourag'd him to ſketch out the death of *Socrates*, in three acts. The place of ſecretary of ſtate,

which

which he had ſome time after, prevented his finiſhing this work; he gave the manuſcript to his pupil, Mr. *Thomſon*, who was afraid to hazard on the ſtage a ſubject ſo extremely grave, and at the ſame time void of all thoſe faſhionable embelliſhments which had then taken poſſeſſion of the Engliſh theatre.

He began therefore with ſome other tragedies, *Sophoniſba*. **Coriolanus*, *Tancred*, &c. and finiſh'd with the death of *Socrates*, which he wrote in proſe ſcene by ſcene, and ſhew'd to his illuſtrious friends, Mr. *Doddington* and Mr. *Lyttleton*, perſons deſervedly rank'd amongſt the firſt geniuſſes in *England*: theſe two gentlemen, whom he always conſulted, adviſed him to follow the example of *Shakeſpear*; to introduce the whole body of the people into his tragedy; to paint *Xantippe*, the wife of *Socrates*, juſt as ſhe really was, a peeviſh, croſs-grain'd city-madam, ſcolding her huſband, and yet fond of him; to bring all the areopagus on the ſtage; and, in a word, to make the whole piece a ſimple repreſentation of human life; one of thoſe pictures that exhibit a view of every ſtate and condition. This is an undertaking attended with

* Mr. Voltaire either forgot or did not know that Coriolanus was Mr. Thomſon's laſt tragedy, and was play'd after his death for the benefit of his relations.

ſome

ſome difficulty; and though the ſublime continued throughout is a ſpecies of writing infinitely ſuperior to it, this mixture of the pathetic and familiar has notwithſtanding its degree of merit. One may compare them to the *Iliad* and the *Odyſſey*. Mr. *Lyttleton* wou'd not ſuffer the piece to be play'd, becauſe the character of *Melitus* too cloſely reſembled that of ſerjeant *Catbrée*, to whom he was related; beſides, that the whole was rather a ſketch than a finiſh'd performance.

He made me a preſent of this drama when he came laſt to *Holland*. I tranſlated it immediately into Dutch, my mother tongue. I did not however think proper to bring it on the ſtage at *Amſterdam*, though, thank God, amongſt all our pedants, we have ne'er a one there ſo hateful or ſo impertinent as ſerjeant *Catbrée*. The great number of actors which this play requires, deterr'd me from any thoughts of exhibiting it. I tranſlated it afterwards into *French*, and ſhall let this tranſlation paſs, till I have an opportunity of publiſhing the original.

Amſterdam 1755.

Since this the death of *Socrates* has been repreſented at *London*, but that was not the play written by Mr. *Thomſon*.

N. B.

N.B. There have been ſome people ridiculous enough to endeavour to refute the palpable truths advanc'd in this preface; pretending that Mr. *Fatima* cou'd not have wrote it in 1755, becauſe he dy'd in 1754: if it was really ſo, what a fooliſh reaſon! but the fact is, he died in 1757.

DRAMATIS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SOCRATES.

ANITUS, High Prieſt of Ceres.

MELITUS, one of the Judges of Athens.

XANTIPPE, Wife of Socrates.

AGLAE, a young Athenian Lady, brought up by Socrates.

SOPHRONIMUS, a young Athenian Gentleman, brought up by Socrates.

DRIXA,
TERPANDER,
ACROS,
} Friends of Anitus.

Judges, Diſciples of Socrates, and three Pedants, protected by Anitus.

SOCRATES,

SOCRATES.

ACT I. SCENE I.

ANITUS, DRIXA, TERPANDER, ACROS.

ANITUS.

MY dear confidante, and you my truſty friends, you well know how much money I have put into your pockets this laſt feaſt of Ceres: I am now going to be marry'd, and I hope you will all do your reſpective duties on this great occaſion.

DRIXA.

That, my lord, we moſt certainly ſhall, provided you give us an opportunity of getting a little more by it.

ANITUS.

I ſhall want of you, madam Drixa, two fine Perſian carpets; from you, Terpander, I muſt have two large ſilver candleſticks; and from you half a dozen robes.

TER-

TERPANDER.

A conſiderable demand, my lord; but there is nothing which we wou'd not do to merit your holy protection.

ANITUS.

O you will be rewarded for it an hundred fold: 'tis the beſt means to gain the favor of the gods: give much, and much you ſhall receive; but above all fail not, I beſeech you, to ſtir up the people againſt all the rich and great, who are deficient in paying their vows, and preſenting their offerings.

ACROS.

On that, my lord, you may depend; it is a duty too ſacred ever to be neglected by us.

ANITUS.

'Tis well, my friends; may heaven continue to inſpire you with the ſame juſt and pious ſentiments, and be aſſur'd you will proſper; you, your children, and your children's children, to all poſterity.

TERPANDER.

You have ſaid it, my lord, and therefore it muſt be ſo.

SCENE

SCENE II.

ANITUS, DRIXA.

ANITUS.

Well, my dear Drixa, I believe you will have no objection to my marrying Aglae; I ſhall not love you the leſs, and we may ſtill live together as we us'd to do.

DRIXA.

O my lord, I am not jealous; as long as trade goes on well, I am contented. Whilſt I had the honour of being one of your miſtreſſes, I was a woman of ſome conſequence in Athens: but if you are in love with Aglae, I, in my turn, am as fond of young Sophronimus: and Xantippe, Socrates' wife, has promis'd that he ſhall marry me. I ſhall be always, notwithſtanding, as much at your ſervice as ever. I am only vex'd that this young fellow has been brought up with that raſcal Socrates, and that Aglae is ſtill in his hands. We muſt take 'em both out as faſt as we can. Xantippe will be glad to get rid of them. The beautiful Sophronimus and the fair Aglae have a ſad time of it with the ſurly Socrates.

ANITUS.

I am in great hopes, my dear, that Melitus and I together ſhall ſoon be able to deſtroy this dangerous fellow,

fellow, who preaches nothing but virtue and divinity, and has taken the liberty to laugh at ſome certain adventures that happen'd at the myſteries of Ceres: but he is Aglae's tutor: her father, Agathon, they tell me, has left her a great fortune: in ſhort, Aglae is a charming girl; I love her, and I will marry her; and as to Socrates, I ſhall take care of him.

DRIXA.

Do what you pleaſe with Socrates, ſo I can but get my dear Sophronimus: but how cou'd that fool Agathon leave his daughter in the hands of this old flat-nos'd Socrates, that intolerable reaſoner, who corrupts all our young men, and keeps them away from courtezans and the myſteries.

ANITUS.

Agathon himſelf was tainted with the ſame vile principles: he was one of your ſober ſerious fools, whoſe manners differ'd in every reſpect from ours; a man, in ſhort, of another age, one of our ſworn and inveterate enemies, who think they have fulfill'd every duty when they worſhip God, aſſiſt man, cultivate friendſhips, and ſtudy philoſophy; one of thoſe ridiculous creatures who inſolently deny that the gods prognoſticate future events by the liver of an ox; thoſe

thoſe mercileſs reaſoners, who find fault with prieſts for ſacrificing young girls, or paſſing a night with them on occaſion. Theſe you ſee, Drixa, are a kind of people not fit to live. As to Socrates, I ſhou'd have been glad to have had him ſtrangled long ago. However, I have agreed to meet him here in the portico, and talk with him about the marriage.

DRIXA.

Here he comes: you do him too much honor: but I muſt leave you, and talk to Xantippe about my young man.

ANITUS.

The gods conduct you, my dear Drixa; remember to ſerve them, and don't forget my two fine Perſian carpets.

SCENE III.

ANITUS, SOCRATES.

ANITUS.

Good morrow, my dear Socrates, thou favorite of the gods, and wiſeſt of men; methinks every time I ſee you I am raiſ'd above myſelf; in you I look up with admiration to the dignity of human nature.

SOCRATES.

O my lord, I am a plain ſimple man, as void of knowledge, and as full of weakneſs, as any of my fellow-creatures: it is enough for me if you can bear with me.

ANITUS.

Bear with? I admire you, and wou'd it were poſſible I cou'd reſemble you! To convince you of it, and that I may oftener be a witneſs to your virtues, and improve by your inſtructions, I am willing to eſpouſe your fair pupil Aglae, whom I find you have the intire diſpoſal of.

SOCRATES.

It is true indeed that her father Agathon, who was my friend, the deareſt of all relations, bequeathed to my care, by his laſt will, this amiable and virtuous orphan.

ANITUS.

With a conſiderable fortune no doubt, for I hear ſhe is one of the beſt matches in all Athens.

SOCRATES.

With regard to that I can give you no information; her father, my deareſt friend, whoſe will is ever ſacred to me, forbade me to divulge the ſituation of her affairs in that point.

ANITUS.

ANITUS.

This reſpect and diſcrete veneration for the laſt will of your friend are worthy of your noble ſoul; but it is well enough known that Agathon was rich.

SOCRATES.

He deſerved to be ſo, if riches are a mark of the divine favor.

ANITUS.

They tell me a young coxcomb, named Sophronimus, makes love to her on account of her fortune; but I am perſuaded you will not give encouragement to ſuch a fellow, and that Anitus will have no rival.

SOCRATES.

I know in what light I ought to conſider a perſon like you; but it is not for me to thwart the inclinations of Aglae. I wou'd ſupply the place of a father to her, but I am not her maſter: ſhe has a right to diſpoſe of her own heart: I look upon reſtraint in this caſe as a crime: talk to her: if ſhe hearkens to your propoſal, with all my heart, I have no objection.

ANITUS.

I have your wife's conſent already; without doubt ſhe is acquainted with Aglae's ſentiments, and therefore I look upon the affair as good as concluded.

SOCRATES.

But I never look upon things as done till they are really ſo.

SCENE IV.

SOCRATES, ANITUS, AGLAE.

SOCRATES.

Come hither, Aglae, and determine for yourſelf. Here is a perſon of conſiderable rank, who offers himſelf to you for a huſband: you are at liberty to explain yourſelf to him: my preſence might perhaps be a reſtraint upon you: whatever choice you make I ſhall approve: Xantippe will prepare every thing for your nuptials.

(Exit.

ANGLAE.

Generous Socrates! I am ſorry you leave me.

ANITUS.

You ſeem, charming Aglae, to place great confidence in the good Socrates.

AGLAE.

It is my duty, Sir; he has been a father to me; he has educated and inſtructed me.

ANITUS.

ANITUS.

And pray, my dear, as he has inſtructed you, tell me what is your opinion of Ceres, Cybele, and Venus?

AGLAE.

Of them, ſir, I will think juſt as you pleaſe.

ANITUS.

'Tis well ſaid, and you will do as I pleaſe too then I hope.

AGLAE.

No, ſir, that is quite another affair.

ANITUS.

You ſee, the wiſe Socrates conſents to our marriage, and Xantippe above all things wiſhes for it. You know my paſſion for you, and are no ſtranger to my rank and fortune; my happineſs, perhaps your own too, depends on one word, therefore determine.

AGLAE.

I will anſwer you, ſir, with that truth and ſincerity which the great man who juſt now left us taught me never to depart from: I reſpect your dignity, know but little of your perſon, and, in a word, can never be yours.

ANITUS.

Never? cruel Aglae, are you not free? you will not then?

AGLAE.

No, Sir, I cannot.

ANITUS.

What an affront, what an indignity is this! but 'tis to Socrates I am oblig'd for it: he dictated your anſwer, I know he did; he prefers Sophronimus to to me, that unworthy rival, that impious —

AGLAE.

Sophronimus is not impious, not unworthy; Socrates has lov'd him from his infancy; he has been a father to us both. Sophronimus is all beauty and all virtue; I love, and am belov'd by him; it is in my power to marry him if I think proper; but I ſhall no more be his than yours.

ANITUS.

You aſtoniſh me: what! own you love Sophronimus?

AGLAE.

Yes, ſir, I own it, becauſe it is true.

ANITUS.

And yet when it is in your power to make yourſelf happy with him, refuſe him your hand?

AGLAE.

AGLAE.

That, ſir, is no leſs true.

ANITUS.

Then I ſuppoſe your fear of diſpleaſing me prevents your engaging with him?

AGLAE.

No ſuch thing, I aſſure you: for having never wiſhed to pleaſe, I have no fear of diſpleaſing you.

ANITUS.

You dread then perhaps the diſpleaſure of the gods, at ſeeing you prefer a profane wretch, like Sophronimus, to a high-prieſt.

AGLAE.

Not in the leaſt. I am perſuaded it is matter of very little concern to the ſupreme being, whether I marry you, or not.

ANITUS.

The ſupreme being! my dear child, you ſhou'd not talk in this manner; you ſhou'd ſay the gods and goddeſſes: take care, for I ſee you entertain ſome very dangerous opinions; but I know too well from whom they came. Learn then that Ceres, whoſe prieſt I am, may puniſh you for thus deſpiſing her worſhip, and her miniſter.

AGLAE.

I deſpiſe neither the one nor the other. I have been told that Ceres preſides over the harveſt, and I believe it; but ſhe has nothing to do with my marriage.

ANITUS.

She has to do with every thing, you know it; but I hope I ſhall be able to convert you. Are you indeed reſolv'd not to marry Sophronimus?

AGLAE.

Yes; I am reſolv'd, and am very ſorry for it.

ANITUS.

I cannot underſtand a word of all theſe contradictions: but obſerve me; I love you, wou'd have made you happy, and advanc'd you to rank and dignity: be adviſ'd, and reject not the offers which kind fortune thus courts you to accept: remember that every thing ſhou'd be ſacrific'd to our real intereſt; that youth will paſs away, but riches remain: that wealth and honours ſhou'd be your firſt concern, and that I ſpeak to you on the part of the gods. I beg you will reflect ſeriouſly on what I have ſaid: farewell; my dear girl, I ſhall pray to Ceres that ſhe wou'd inſpire you, and ſtill flatter myſelf ſhe will touch your heart. Once more adieu, remember, you have promiſ'd me never to marry Sophronimus.

AGLAE.

AGLAE.

I promis'd myſelf, but not you.

[Exit Anitus.

AGLAE. alone.

This man but makes me more unhappy. I know not why it is, but I never ſee him without ſhuddering: but here comes Sophronimus: alas! whilſt his rival fills my heart with terror, he increaſes my tenderneſs and doubles my diſquietude.

SCENE V.

AGLAE SOPRONIMUS.

SOPHRONIMUS.

My dear Aglae, I met Anitus, the prieſt of Ceres, that worſt of men, the ſworn enemy of Socrates, juſt coming from you: your eyes ſeem bath'd in tears.

AGLAE.

Is he the enemy of our benefactor too? then indeed I wonder not at my averſion to him, even before he ſpoke.

SOPHRONIMUS.

And is he the cauſe of your tears, my Aglae?

AGLAE.

No, Sophronimus, he can inſpire nothing but hatred and diſguſt; my tears can flow for you alone.

SOPHRONIMUS.

For me? O gods, for me, who wou'd repay them with my blood, for me who adore you, who hope to be belov'd by Aglae, who only live for and wou'd die for you? ſhall I reproach myſelf with having embitter'd one moment of your life? Aglae weeps, and Sophronimus is the cauſe. What have I done? what crime have I committed?

AGLAE.

None, my Sophronimus: you cou'd not do it: 'tis not in your nature. I wept becauſe you merit all my tenderneſs, becauſe you have it, and becauſe I muſt renounce you.

SOPHRONIMUS.

What dreadful ſentence have you pronounc'd againſt me? I cannot believe you: you love me, you ſaid you did, and Aglae can never change. You have promiſed to be mine, you cannot wiſh my death.

AGLAE.

No; I wou'd have thee live and be happy; but, alas! I cannot make you ſo: I hoped I cou'd, but fortune has deceiv'd me. I ſwear to you, Sophronimus, ſince I cannot be yours, I never will be another's. I have declared ſo to Anitus, who courts me, and whom I deſpiſe; and here I declare the ſame to you, with a heart full of grief, tenderneſs, and love.

SO-

SOPHRONIMUS.

Since you love me, I muſt live; but if you refuſe me your hand, it will be death to Sophronimus; therefore, my deareſt Aglae, in the name of love, of all your charms, and all your virtues, explain to me this dreadful miſtery.

SCENE VI.

SOCRATES, SOPHRONIMUS, AGLAE.

SOPHRONIMUS.

O my honour'd maſter, my father, and my friend, behold in Sophronimus the moſt unfortunate of men, though in the preſence of the only two beings upon earth who cou'd make me happy: Socrates firſt taught me wiſdom, and from Aglae I learn'd to love; you conſented to our marriage, and this beauteous fair one, who ſeem'd ſo deſirous of it, now refuſes me; and whilſt ſhe ſays ſhe loves, plunges a dagger in my heart: ſhe has broke off the match without aſſigning any cauſe of her cruel caprice: O Socrates, prevent my miſery, or teach me, if poſſible, how to bear it.

SOCRATES.

Aglae is miſtreſs of herſelf; her father made me her tutor, but not her tyrant; to ſee you united wou'd have

have made me happy: If ſhe has chang'd her mind I am ſurpris'd and ſorry for it: but let us hear her reaſons; if they are good, we muſt ſubmit to them.

SOPHRONIMUS.

It is impoſſible they ſhou'd.

AGLAE.

To me however they appear ſo, but you ſhall hear them. When you firſt open'd my father's will, moſt noble Socrates, you told me he had left me a ſufficient competency; from that moment I reſolv'd to beſtow my fortune on the good Sophronimus, who has no ſupport but you, no riches but his virtue: you applauded my reſolution. How great was my happineſs, in promoting that of him whom you have ſo long regarded as your own ſon! full of this pleaſing hope I laid open the ſituation of my heart to Xantippe, who at once undeceiv'd me. She treated me as an idle viſionary; ſhew'd me the will of my father, who dy'd a beggar, and left me nothing but your friendſhip to depend on. Awaken'd from my dream of promis'd happineſs, nothing remain'd for me but the melancholy reflection, that it was no longer in my power to make the fortune of Sophronimus: I wou'd not oppreſs him with the weight of my misfortunes.

SO-

SOPHRONIMUS.

I told you, Socrates, her reaſons were poor and inſufficient; If ſhe loves me, am I not rich enough? Hitherto, it is true, I have ſubſiſted from your bounty; but there is no employment, however irkſome, which I wou'd not undertake, to provide for my deareſt Aglae: I ought indeed to make her a ſacrifice of my paſſion, to find out ſome richer happier lover for her: but I own my weakneſs, I cannot do it, there I am indeed unworthy of her; but if ſhe cou'd content herſelf with my low eſtate, if ſhe cou'd ſtoop to my humble condition: but I dare not hope ſo much; I ſink beneath a misfortune which her fortitude is able to bear.

SOCRATES.

My dear children, it was very indiſcreet in Xantippe to ſhew you the will; but believe me, Aglae, ſhe deceiv'd you.

AGLAE.

Indeed ſhe has not: I ſaw it with my own eyes: I know my father's hand too well to have the leaſt doubt of it: but be aſſured, Socrates, I ſhall be able to bear poverty as I ought: theſe hands will ſupport me; if I can but live, it is enough for me, but it is not for Sophronimus.

SOPHRONIMUS.

It is too much, a thouſand times too much for me: thou tender noble ſoul, worthy of thy illuſtrious maſter: a virtuous and laborious poverty is the natural ſtate of man. I wiſh I cou'd have offer'd you a throne, but if you will condeſcend to live with Sophronimus, our reſpectable poverty will be ſuperior to the throne of Croeſus.

SOCRATES.

Your generous ſentiments at once delight and diſtreſs me: I behold with tranſport thoſe virtues buding forth in your heart, which I myſelf had ſown: never were my hopes better fulfilled than in Aglae and Sophronimus: but once more believe me, Aglae, my wife has miſinform'd you: you are richer than you think you are: it was not to her, but to me your father entruſted you. May he not have left you a fortune which Xantippe knows nothing of?

AGLAE.

No, Socrates, he ſays expreſsly in his will, that he has left me poor.

SOCRATES.

And I tell you that you are deceiv'd, that he has left you a ſufficient competency to enable you to live happily with the virtuous Sophronimus, and that I deſire therefore

therefore you wou'd come, and ſign the contract immediately.

SCENE VII.

SOCRATES, XANTIPPE, AGLAE, SOPHRONIMUS.

XANTIPPE.

Come, come, child, don't ſtand amuſing yourſelf there with my huſband's viſions and nonſenſe: philoſophy to be ſure is a mighty pretty thing when folks have nothing elſe to do: but you are a beggar, child; and muſt ſtudy how to live firſt, and philoſophiſe afterwards. I have concluded your marriage with Anitus, a worthy prieſt, and a man of fortune. Come, child, follow me, let me have no delays nor contradiction; I love to be obey'd: quick, quick, my dear, 'tis for your good, therefore let me have none of your reaſonings, but follow me.

SOPHRONIMUS.

O heaven! my dear Aglae!

SOCRATES.

Let her talk, and truſt to me for your happineſs.

XANTIPPE.

Let me talk indeed! I ſhall talk and do too, I aſ-

ſure

ſure you. You are a pretty one to be ſure, with your wiſdom, your familiar dæmon, your irony, and all your nonſenſe that ſignifies nothing, to trouble yourſelf about matrimony: you are a good ſort of man, but you really know nothing of the world; happy is it for you that I am able to govern you. Come, Aglae, I muſt ſettle you as ſoon as poſſible: And you, ſir, there, that ſeem as if you were thunderſtruck, I have taken care of you too: Drixa is the woman for you: you will both of you thank me by and by: I ſhall have done it all in a minute: I am very expeditious: let us loſe no time therefore, by rights it ſhou'd have been all over before this.

SOCRATES.

My children, don't thwart or provoke her, but pay her all kind of deference: we muſt comply with ſince we can't mend her: it is the triumph of reaſon to live well with thoſe who have none.

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT

ACT II. SCENE I.

SOCRATES, SOPHRONIMUS.

SOPHRONIMUS.

Divine Socrates, I know not how to believe my own happineſs: how can Aglae, whoſe father dy'd in extreme poverty, be poſſeſs'd of ſo conſiderable a fortune?

SOCRATES.

I told you before, ſhe had more than ſhe thought ſhe had: I knew her father's affairs better than herſelf: let it ſuffice that you both enjoy a fortune which you deſerve: the ſecrets of the dead ſhou'd be preſerv'd as religiouſly as thoſe of the living.

SOPHRONIMUS.

I am only afraid the prieſt of Ceres, to whom you have preferr'd Sophronimus, will endeavour to revenge Aglae's refuſal upon you: he is a man whom we have reaſon to dread.

SOCRATES.

What has he to fear who does his duty? I know the malice of my enemies; I know all their calumnies; but when we take care never to offend God, and endeavour to do all the good we can to mankind, then is it that we are afraid of nothing, or whilſt we live, or when we die.

SO-

SOPHRONIMUS.

I know it well; yet I ſhou'd die with grief if the happineſs you beſtow'd on me ſhou'd induce your enemies to put your virtue to the trial.

SCENE II.

SOCRATES, SOPHRONIMUS, AGLAE.

AGLAE.

O my benefactor, my father, let me fall at your feet, thou more than man; join me, Sophronimus, in mutual acknowledgments; 'tis he, 'tis Socrates who marrys us at his own expence, and gives us beſt part of his own fortune to ſupport us: but we muſt not ſuffer him, we muſt not be rich on theſe conditions; no, if our hearts have any gratitude, let them imitate his generoſity.

SOPHRONIMUS.

O Socrates, with her I throw myſelf at thy feet; like her I am charm'd aſtoniſh'd and confounded at thy goodneſs; we will not, muſt not abuſe it: look on us as your children, but do not let thoſe children be a burthen to their kind parent; thy friendſhip is fortune ſufficient, 'tis all that we deſire: you are not rich, and yet you do more than all the great ones of the earth; but were we to accept thy bounties, we ſhou'd be unworthy of them.

SOCRA-

SOCRATES.

Riſe, my children, you affect me too deeply: are we not bound to reſpect the will of the dead? did not your father, Aglae, whom I always conſider'd as part of myſelf, did he not injoin me to treat you as my daughter? Had I not done ſo, I had betray'd the confidence of friendſhip: I took upon me the performance of his will, and I have executed it: the little I beſtow on you wou'd have been uſeleſs to my old age, which has not many wants to ſupply. If it was my duty to obey my friend, it is yours to obey your father. I am that father now, and by that ſacred name command you not to make me unhappy by your refuſal: but retire, I ſee Xantippe coming this way; I have reaſons for deſiring you to avoid her at preſent.

AGLAE.

Your commands are cruel, but they muſt be obey'd.

SCENE III.

SOCRATES, XANTIPPE.

XANTIPPE.

A fine piece of work you have made here; upon my word, my dear huſband, I muſt put a ſtop to your proceedings. Here had I promis'd Aglae to Anitus the high-prieſt, a man of intereſt amongſt the great, and

Sophro-

Sophronimus to the rich Drixa, a man of the moſt extenſive influence in the whole nation; and you marry your two fools together, and make me break my word to both: not content with this, you muſt needs give 'em beſt part of your fortune too. Twenty thouſand drachms! good gods! twenty thouſand drachms! an't you aſham'd of yourſelf? at the age of threeſcore and ten too? Who's to pay your phyſicians when you are ſick? or your lawyers when you have a law-ſuit? What am I to do, when that villainous wry-neck'd fellow, Anitus, whom you might have had on your ſide, if he ſhou'd join his party to perſecute you, as they have done ſo often already? confuſion to all philoſophy and philoſophers I ſay, and to my own fooliſh regard for you! You pretend to direct others, and want leading-ſtrings yourſelf; always reaſoning without a grain of common ſenſe. If you were not one of the beſt men in the world, you wou'd be the moſt ridiculous and the moſt inſupportable: but mind me, you have only one way left, break off this fooliſh match, and do what your wife bids you.

SOCRATES.

You talk well, my dear Xantippe, and with great moderation; but hear what I have to ſay in return. I did not propoſe this marriage myſelf, but Aglae and Sophronimus

Sophronimus love and are worthy of each other. I have already made over every thing to you that the laws will allow me, and have given almoſt all that remain'd to the daughter of my friend: the little which I keep is enough for me. I have no phyſician to pay becauſe I live ſober; no lawyers becauſe I have neither debts nor reverſions: and with regard to that philoſophy you reproach me with, it will teach me to bear the malice of Anitus, and your treatment of me; nay, even to love you, in ſpite of your ill-humour. [Exit.

SCENE IV.

XANTIPPE alone.

The old fool! and yet, ſpite of myſelf I can't help eſteeming him; for after all, there is ſomething great even in his follies: but his coolneſs and indifference makes me mad. To ſcold him is but loſt labour: for theſe thirty years paſt I have been perpetually pecking at him; and when I have tired myſelf with it, he bids me go on, and I am dumb-founded. Surely there muſt be ſomething in that ſoul of his ſuperior to mine.

SCENE

SCENE V.

XANTIPPE, DRIXA.

DRIXA.

So, Madam Xantippe, I ſee you are miſtreſs at home: fye! fye! how mean it is to be govern'd by a huſband! this vile Socrates, to prevent my making a young fellow's fortune; but I'll be reveng'd.

XANTIPPE.

My dear madam Drixa, don't be ſo angry with my huſband, I am angry enough with him myſelf: he's a poor weak man, I confeſs; but I verily believe has one of the beſt hearts in the world; has not the leaſt degree of malice, and does a thouſand fooliſh things without deſigning, and with ſo much honeſty, that one can't help forgiving him: then indeed he is as obſtinate as a mule: I have done nothing but teaſe and torment him my whole life; nay, I have even beat him ſometimes, and yet I have never been able to mend him, nay, not ſo much as to put him into a paſſion. What can I do with him?

DRIXA.

I tell you, I'll be reveng'd: under yonder portico I perceive his good friend Anitus, and ſome more of our party: let me alone with him.

XAN-

XANTIPPE.

My god! I am dreadfully afraid theſe folks, all together, will do my poor huſband ſome miſchief: I muſt go and tell him of it, for after all one can't help loving him.

SCENE VI.

ANITUS, DRIXA, TERPANDER, ACROS.

DRIXA.

Moſt noble Anitus, we have all been wrong'd: you are trick'd as well as myſelf: this vile Socrates has given away three parts of his fortune on purpoſe to ſpite you: you muſt take ample revenge of him.

ANITUS.

I deſign it: heaven itſelf requires it of me: this man treats me with contempt, and of courſe muſt deſpiſe the gods. Already we have had ſeveral accuſations againſt him, we muſt repeat them, you will all aſſiſt me: we will put him in danger of his life, then will I offer him my protection, on condition that he reſigns Aglae to me, and to you the beautiful Sophronimus: thus we ſhall all gain our ſeveral points: he will be ſufficiently puniſhed by the fright we ſhall put him into: I ſhall get my miſtreſs, and you your lover.

DRIXA.

DRIXA.

Wiſdom herſelf ſpeaks in Anitus: ſure ſome divinity inſpires you: but tell us, how are we to proceed?

ANITUS.

This is about the time when the judges go to the tribunal, with Melitus at the head of them.

DRIXA.

That Melitus is a little pedant, a ſad fellow, and your enemy.

ANITUS.

He is ſo; but he is ſtill a greater enemy to Socrates; 'tis a raſcally hypocrite who ſupports the rights of the areopagus againſt me: but we always hold together when our mutual intereſt and buſineſs is to deſtroy theſe pretended wiſe men, who want to open the eyes of people on our conduct: harkee, my dear Drixa, you are a devotee.

DRIXA.

Certainly, my lord, I love money, and I love pleaſure with all my ſoul; but in matters of devotion I yield to none.

ANITUS.

Go then immediately, and get together as many bawling enthuſiaſts as you can, and cry out, impiety! impiety.

TER-

TERPANDER.

Is there any thing to be got by it; if there is, we are all ready?

ACROS.

Ay, ay, that we are; but what ſort of impiety?

ANITUS.

O every kind: however, we had beſt accuſe him at once of not believing in the gods; that's the ſhorteſt way.

DRIXA.

O let me alone then.

ANITUS.

You ſhall be well ſupported; go, and ſtir up your friends under the portico: I'll inform mean time ſome of my news-loving friends of it, who come frequently to dine with me, a parcel of contemptible fellows they are to be ſure, but ſuch as, if properly directed, can do a good deal of miſchief on occaſion: we muſt make uſe of every expedient to promote a good cauſe: away, my friends, recommend yourſelves to Ceres, and be ready to cry out when I give you the ſignal: 'tis the only way for you to live happy here, and gain heaven hereafter.

SCENE VII.

ANITUS, GRAPHIUS, CHOMUS, BERTILLUS.

ANITUS.

Moſt indefatigable Graphius, profound Chomus, and delicate Bertillus, have you finiſh'd thoſe little works as I commanded you againſt the impious Socrates?

GRAPHIUS.

My lord, I have labour'd: he'll never hold up his head again.

CHOMUS.

I have prov'd the fact againſt him; ſtruck him dumb.

BERTILLUS.

I have only mention'd him in my journal, and it has done for him.

ANITUS.

Graphius, beware, you know I forbad your prolixity: you are naturally tedious, and that may wear out the patience of the court.

GRAPHIUS.

My lord, 'tis all in one leaf: wherein I have proved, that the ſoul is an infuſed quinteſcence; that tails were given to animals to drive away flies; that Ceres works

works miracles; and conſequently, that Socrates is an enemy to the ſtate, and ought to be exterminated.

ANITUS.

A moſt excellent concluſion! remember to carry your accuſation to the ſecond judge, who is a complete philoſopher. I'll anſwer for it, you'll ſoon get rid of your enemy Socrates.

GRAPHIUS.

My lord, I am not his enemy: I am only vex'd that he has ſo great a reputation: all that I do is for the glory of Ceres, and the good of my country.

ANITUS.

Well, well, make haſte and be gone: and you, learned Chomus, what have you done?

CHOMUS.

My lord, finding nothing reprehenſible in the writings of Socrates, I ſhall accuſe him point blank of thinking directly oppoſite to what he ſays, and ſhall ſhew the poiſon he intends to ſpread in every thing he is to ſay hereafter.

ANITUS.

Wonderful indeed! carry your piece to the fourth judge: he has not common-ſenſe, and therefore will underſtand you perfectly: now for you, Bertillus.

BERTILLUS.

My lord, here is my laſt journal upon the Chaos. I have proved, by a regular ſeries from the Chaos to the Olympics, that Socrates perverts the youth of Athens.

ANITUS.

Admirable! go you from me to the ſeventh judge, and tell him I deſire he'd take care of Socrates; ſo; here comes Melitus already, the firſt of the eleven; there's no neceſſity of practiſing any art with him, we know one another too well.

SCENE VIII.

ANITUS, MELITUS.

ANITUS.

Mr. Judge, one word with you: this Socrates muſt be deſtroyed.

MELITUS.

Indeed, Mr. High-prieſt, I have long thought ſo: let us agree in this point; we may quarrel, you know, notwithſtanding about every thing elſe.

ANITUS.

I know we hate one another moſt cordially: but at the ſame time we may lay our heads together to govern the commonwealth.

MILITUS.

MILITUS.

With all my heart, no body can overhear us: therefore, to ſpeak freely, I know you are a rogue, and you don't look upon me as a very honeſt man: I can't hurt you becauſe you are high prieſt, nor you me becauſe I am firſt judge; but Socrates may do us both a miſchief, by expoſing us to the world; our firſt buſineſs, therefore, is to deſtroy him, and then we may be at leiſure to fall upon one another the firſt opportunity.

ANITUS. [Aſide.

'Tis well obſerv'd: how I cou'd rejoice now to ſee this raſcally judge upon an altar, his arms hanging on one ſide and his legs on the other, whilſt I with my golden knife was ripping up his guts and conſulting his liver at leiſure!

MELITUS. [Aſide.

Shall I never be able to ſend this villainous high-prieſt to goal, and make him ſwallow a point of hemlock by my command?

ANITUS.

O my friend, here come our noble aſſiſtants. I have taken care to prepare the populace.

MELITUS.

Very well, my dear friend, you may depend upon me in this affair, not forgetting old ſcores.

SCENE IX.

ANITUS, MELITUS, ſome of the Judges of Athens paſſing along under the portico.

Anitus whiſpers Melitus.

DRIXA, TERPANDER, and ACROS together.

Juſtice, juſtice, ſcandal, impiety, juſtice, juſtice, irreligion, impiety, juſtice!

ANITUS.

What's the matter, my friends, what's your complaint?

DRIXA, TERPANDER, and ACROS.

Juſtice! in the name of the people.

MILITUS.

Againſt whom?

DRIXA, TERPANDER, and ACROS.

Againſt Socrates.

MILITUS.

Ha! ha! againſt Socrates? that fellow has been often accuſed: what has he done now?

ACROS.

ACROS.

I don't know what.

TERPANDER.

They ſay he gives money to young girls in marriage.

ACROS.

Ay, he corrupts our youth.

DRIXA.

O he's a wicked wretch: he has offer'd up no cakes to Ceres; he ſays there is a great deal of uſeleſs gold and ſilver in the temple.

ACROS.

Ay, and he ſays the prieſts of Ceres get drunk ſometimes; that's true; he's a wicked wretch indeed.

DRIXA.

He's a heretic; he denys the plurality of gods; he's a deiſt: he believes only in one God; he's an atheiſt.

All three together.

Yes; he's a heretic, a deiſt, and an atheiſt.

MELITUS.

Dreadful accuſations indeed, and all extremely probable: I have heard as much before.

ANITUS.

The ſtate is in danger if we leave ſuch crimes unpuniſh'd: Minerva will withdraw her protection from us.

DRIXA.

Ay, that ſhe will, I have heard him laugh at Minerva's owl.

MELITUS.

At Minerva's owl! O heav'n! gentlemen, is not it your opinion he ought to be ſent to priſon immediately?

The Judges all together.

To priſon with him, to priſon.

MELITUS.

Guards, carry Socrates to priſon this inſtant.

DRIXA.

And afterwards let him be burn'd without a hearing.

One of the Judges.

No, no; we muſt hear him; we muſt not go againſt the law.

ANITUS.

No, no; that's what the good woman meant: we muſt hear him, but not let what he ſays have too much effect

effect on us; you know these philosophers are * devilish subtle: 'tis they who have disturb'd all those nations which we have endeavour'd to render peaceable and quiet.

MELITUS.

To prison with him, to prison.

SCENE X.

To them enter XANTIPPE, SOPHRONIMUS, AGLAE, SOCRATES in chains.

XANTIPPE, Servants.

O mercy, mercy, my poor husband is going to prison; an't you ashamed, Mr. Judges, to treat a man of his years in this manner? What harm cou'd he do? Alas! it is not in his power, † he is more fool than knave, God knows; have pity on him, good gentlemen. O my dear, I told you you wou'd draw your-

* The reader will observe, that Mr. Voltaire has made use of two or three phrases that wou'd come with more propriety from the mouth of a French catholic, than a heathen priest; such as gagner le ciel, Heretique and Diabolique; and some other terms which the Greeks were propably not very well acquainted with.

† La Fontaine's servant, it is reported, said the same thing of her master. It is not Mr. Thomson's fault if Xantippe said the same thing before her. Mr. Thomson painted Xantippe as she really was: he was not oblig'd to make a Cornelia of her.

ſelf into ſome bad affair. This comes of portioning young girls. What an unhappy creature I am!

SOPHRONIMUS.

O my lords, reſpect his age, reſpect his virtue; give me his chains! I am ready to yield up my liberty, my life for his.

AGLAE.

Yes; we will go to priſon in his ſtead; we will die for him: do not deſtroy the nobleſt, beſt of men: take us rather for your victims.

MELITUS.

You ſee how he corrupts our youth.

SOCRATES.

No more, my wife, no more, my children; do not oppoſe the will of heaven, which ſpeaks by the laws: he who reſiſts the law, is no longer a citizen. God wills that I ſhou'd be put in bondage; I ſubmit to his divine decree without murmur, or repining. In my own houſe, in Athens, or in a priſon, I am equally free; and whilſt I behold in you ſo much gratitude, and ſo much friendſhip, I am happy. What matters it whether Socrates ſleeps in his own chamber, or in a priſon? Every thing is as the ſupreme will ordains, and my will ſhou'd ſubmit to it.

MELI-

MELITUS.

Take away this reaſoner.

ANITUS.

Gentlemen, what he ſays I muſt own has affected me; the man ſeems to have a good diſpoſition; I flatter myſelf I ſhou'd be able to convert him; let me have a little private converſation with him; pleaſe to order his wife and theſe young folks to retire.

One of the Judges.

Moſt venerable Anitus, you have our conſent to parley with him before he appears at the tribunal.

SCENE XI.

ANITUS, SOCRATES.

ANITUS.

Moſt virtuous Socrates, my heart bleeds to ſee you in this condition.

SOCRATES.

And have you a heart?

ANITUS.

I have, and one that feels for you: I am ready to do every thing for you.

SOCRATES.

I think you have done enough already.

ANI-

ANITUS.

Harke'e, Socrates, your ſituation is worſe than you think it is; let me tell you, your life is in danger.

SOCRATES.

That is of very little conſequence.

ANITUS.

To your noble ſoul it may appear ſo, but it is otherwiſe in the eyes of all thoſe who, like me, admire your virtue: believe me, however you may be arm'd by philoſophy, it is dreadful to die a death of ignominy: but that is not all; your reputation, which ſhou'd be dear to you, will be ſullied in after ages: the religious of both ſexes will laugh at your fall, and inſult you: if you are burn'd, they'll light the pile; if you're ſtrangled, they'll tie the cord; if you're poiſon'd, they'll pound the hemlock; and not only that, but they'll make your memory execrable to all poſterity. Now it is in your own power to prevent all this: I will promiſe not only to ſave your life, but even to perſuade your judges to ſay with the oracle, that you are the wiſeſt of men: you have nothing to do but to give me up your young pupil, Aglae, with the portion; you underſtand me: as to her marriage with Sophronimus, we ſhall find means to ſet it aſide: thus you will enjoy

a peaceful and honourable old age, and the gods and goddeſſes will bleſs you.

SOCRATES.

Soldiers, conduct me to priſon immediately.

[He is carry'd off.

ANITUS.

This fellow is incorrigible; but it's not my fault; I have done my duty, and have nothing to reproach myſelf with: he muſt be abandon'd as a reprobate, and left to die in his ſins.

END of the SECOND ACT.

ACT III. SCENE I.

The Judges ſeated on the Tribunal.

SOCRATES below.

JUDGE. [To Anitus.

YOU ſhou'd not ſit here, you are prieſt of Ceres.

ANITUS.

I am only here for edification.

MELITUS.

Silence there: Socrates, you are accuſed of being a bad citizen, of corrupting youth, of denying a plura-

lity

lity of gods, of being a heretic, deiſt, and atheiſt: anſwer to the charge.

SOCRATES.

Judges of Athens, I exhort you all to be as good citizens as I have always myſelf endeavour'd to be: to ſhed your blood for your country, as I have done in many a battle: with regard to youth, guide them by your counſels, and, above all, direct them by your example; teach them to love true virtue, and to avoid the miſerable philoſophy of the ſchools: the article concerning a plurality of gods is a little more difficult to diſcuſs, but hear what I have to ſay upon it. Know then, ye judges of Athens, there is but one God.

MELITUS and another Judge.

O the impious wretch!

SOCRATES.

I ſay, there is but one God, in his nature infinite, nor can any being partake of his infinity. Turn your eyes towards the celeſtial globes, to the earth and ſeas; all correſpond together, all are made one for the other: each being is intimately connected with other beings, all form'd with one deſign, by one great architect, one only maſter, and preſerver: perhaps he hath deigned to create genii, and dæmons, more powerful and more

more wiſe than men; if ſuch exiſt, they are creatures like you, his firſt ſubjects, not gods: but nothing in nature proves to us that they do exiſt, whilſt all nature ſpeaks one God and one father: this God hath no need of Mercury and Iris to deliver his commands to us: he hath only to will, and that is enough. If by Minerva you underſtand no more than the wiſdom of God; if by Neptune you only mean his immutable laws, which raiſe or depreſs the ſea, you may ſtill reverence Neptune and Minerva, provided that under theſe emblems you adore none but the ſupreme being, and that the people are not deceiv'd by you into falſe opinions.

Be careful above all not to turn religion into metaphyſycs, its eſſence is morality: diſpute not, but worſhip. If our anceſtors believ'd that the ſupreme God came down into the arms of Alcmene, Danae, and Semele, and had children by them, our anceſtors imagin'd dangerous and idle fables. 'Tis an inſult on the divinity to conceive that he cou'd poſſibly, in any manner whatſoever, commit with woman the crime which we call adultery. It is a diſcouragement to the reſt of mankind to ſay, that, to be a great man, it neceſſary to be produced from the myſterious union of Jupiter and one of our own wives and daughters. Miltiades, Cimon, Themiſtocles, and Ariſtides, whom you perſecuted,

ſecuted, were perhaps much greater than Perſeus, Hercules, or Bacchus. The only way to become the children of God, is to endeavour to pleaſe him. Deſerve therefore that title, by never paſſing an unjuſt ſentence.

MELITUS.

What inſolence! what blaſphemy!

Another Judge.

What abſurdities! one can't tell what he means.

MELITUS.

Socrates, you are always too fond of argument: anſwer briefly, and with preciſion: did you, or did you not, laugh at Minerva's owl?

SOCRATES.

Judges of Athens, take care of your owls; when you propoſe ridiculous things as objects of belief; too many are apt to reſolve that they will believe nothing: they have ſenſe enough to find out that your doctrine is abſurd, though they have not elevation of mind ſufficient to diſcover the law of truth; they know how to laugh at your little deceits, but not to adore the firſt of beings, the one incomprehenſible, incommunicable being, the eternal, all-juſt, and all-powerful God.

MELI-

MELITUS.

O the blaſphemer! the monſter! he has ſaid too much already: I condemn him to death.

Many of the Judges.

And ſo do we.

One of the Judges.

Several of us are of another opinion; Socrates has ſpoken wiſely; we believe men would be more wiſe and juſt if they thought like him: for my part, far from condemning him, I think he ought to be rewarded.

Many of the Judges.

We think ſo too.

MELITUS.

The opinions ſeem to be divided.

ANITUS.

Gentlemen of the areopagus, permit me to interrogate him a little. Do you believe, Socrates, that the ſun turns round, and that the areopagus acts by divine right?

SOCRATES.

You have no authority to aſk any queſtions, but I have authority to teach you what you are ignorant of: it is of little importance to ſociety, whether the ſun or the earth turns round, but it is of the utmoſt conſequence, whether the men who turn with them be

juſt

juſt or unjuſt: virtue only acts from the right divine, and you and the areopagus have no rights but thoſe which your country has beſtowed on you.

ANITUS.

Illuſtrious and moſt equitable judges, let Socrates retire.

[Melitus makes a ſign, Socrates is carried out.

ANITUS proceeds.

Moſt auguſt areopagus, inſtituted by heaven, you hear what he ſays: this dangerous fellow denies that the ſun turns round, and that you act by right divine: if theſe opinions prevail, adieu to magiſtracy, and adieu to the ſun: you are no longer judges appointed by Minerva; you will become accountable for your proceedings; you muſt no longer determine but according to the laws; and if you once depend on the laws, you are undone: puniſh rebellion therefore, revenge earth and heaven: I am going: dread you the anger of the gods if Socrates is permitted to live.

[Anitus goes out, and the Judges demur.

One of the Judges.

I don't care to quarrel with Anitus; he is a dangerous man to offend. If he troubled himſelf with the gods only it would not ſignify.

Another

Another Judge to his brother ſitting near him.

Between you and me, Socrates is in the right; but then he ſhould not be in the right ſo publicly. I care no more for Ceres and Neptune than he does; but he ſhould not ſpeak out to the whole areopagus what he ought to have whiſpered: yet after all, what is there in poiſoning a philoſopher, eſpecially when he is old and ugly?

Another Judge.

If there be any injuſtice in condemning Socrates, it is Anitus's buſineſs and not mine: I lay it all upon his conſcience: beſides, it grows late, we loſe our time; let us talk no more about it: to death with him.

Another.

Ay, ay, they ſay he's an heretic, and an atheiſt; to death with him.

MELITUS.

Call Socrates.

[He is brought in]

Bleſſed be the gods, the plurality of voices is for death; Socrates, the gods by us condemn you to drink hemlock.

SOCRATES.

We are all mortal: nature condemns you alſo to death in a ſhort time, probably you may meet with a more

more unhappy end than mine: the diſtempers which bring on death are much more painful than a cup of hemlock. I thank thoſe amongſt my judges who pleaded in favor of innocence; for the reſt, they have my pity.

One of the Judges going out.

Certainly this man deſerv'd a penſion from the ſtate, rather than a cup of poiſon.

Another Judge.

I think ſo too; but why wou'd he quarrel with a prieſt of Ceres?

Another.

After all, it is beſt to get rid of a philoſopher: thoſe fellows have always a certain fierceneſs of ſpirit which ſhou'd be damp'd a little.

Another.

One word with you, gentlemen: wou'd not it be right, whilſt our hand is in, to make an end of all the geometricians, who pretend that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones? they are a mighty ſcandal to the fooliſh people that read their works.

Another.

Another.

Ay, ay, we'll hang 'em all the next ſeſſion, * let's go to dinner.

SCENE II.

SOCRATES alone.

I have been long prepar'd for death; all I fear at preſent is, that my wife Xantippe will be troubling me in my laſt moments, and interrupt me in the ſweet employment of recollecting my ſoul, and preparing myſelf for eternity: I ought to buſy myſelf only in the contemplation of that ſupreme being, before whom I am ſoon to appear: but here ſhe comes; I muſt be reſign'd to all things.

SCENE III.

SOCRATES, XANTIPPE, with the Diſciples of Socrates.

XANTIPPE.

Well, my poor man, what have theſe gentlemen of the law concluded on? have they fined you, are you baniſhed or acquitted? my God! how uneaſy

* In the ſixth century a parallel circumſtance actually happen'd, and one of the judges made uſe of thoſe very words, "to death "with him, and let's go to dinner.

have

have I been about you! pray take care this don't happen a ſecond time.

SOCRATES.

No, my dear, this will not happen a ſecond time, I'll anſwer for it; give yourſelf no uneaſineſs about any thing. My dear diſciples, my friends, wellcome.

CRITO at the head of his diſciples.

You ſee us, beloved Socrates, no leſs concerned for you than Xantippe; we have gained permiſſion of the judges to viſit you; juſt heaven! muſt we behold Socrates in chains! permit us to kiſs thoſe bonds which reflect ſhame on Athens. How could Anitus and his friends reduce you to this condition?

SOCRATES.

Let us think no more of theſe trifles, my friends, but continue the examination we were making yeſterday into the ſoul's immortality. We obſerv'd, I remember, that nothing could be more probable, or at the ſame time more full of comfort and ſatisfaction, than this ſweet idea; in fact, matter we know changes, but periſhes not; why then ſhould the ſoul periſh? can it be that, raiſed as we are to the knowledge of a God through the veil of this mortal body, we ſhou'd ceaſe to know him when that veil is removed? no, as

we

we think now, we muſt always think; thought is the very eſſence of man; and this being muſt appear before a juſt God, who will recompence virtue, puniſh vice, and pardon weakneſs and error.

XANTIPPE.

Nobly ſaid: but what does this fellow here with his cup?

Enter the Goaler, or Executioner of the Eleven, carrying a cup of Hemlock.

Goaler.

Here, Socrates, the ſenate have ſent you this.

XANTIPPE.

Thou vile poiſoner of the common-wealth, wou'd you kill my huſband before my face? monſter, I'll tear you to pieces.

SOCRATES.

My dear friend, I aſk your pardon for my wife's rude behaviour: ſhe has ſcolded me all her life; ſhe only treats you as ſhe does her huſband; excuſe her impertinence: give me the cup.

[He takes the cup.

One of the Diſciples.

O divine Socrates! why may not we take that poiſon for you? horrible injuſtice! ſhall the guilty thus condemn the innocent, and fools deſtroy the wiſe? you go then to death!

SOCRA-

SOCRATES.

No, my friends, to life: this is the cup of immortality: it is not this periſhable body that has loved, and inſtructed you; it is my ſoul alone that has lived with you, and that ſhall love you for ever.

[He is going to drink.

GOALER.

I muſt take off your fetters firſt; 'tis always done.

SOCRATES.

Do it then, I beg you.

[He ſcratches his leg.

One of the Diſciples,

You ſmile!

SOCRATES.

I ſmile at the reflection, that pleaſure ſhou'd ariſe from pain: thus it is that eternal felicity ſhall ſpring from the * miſeries of this life.

[Drinks the poiſon.

CRITO.

Alas! what have you done?

---

* I have taken the liberty here to retrench two whole pages of a fine ſermon by Socrates: this common-place morality is extremely tireſome: thoſe honeſt gentlemen, who are of opinion that Socrates ſhou'd have talk'd a long time on this occaſion, are ſtrangers both to the theatre, and the human heart.

Semper ad eventum feſtinat.

This is the great rule which Mr. Thomſon carefully obſerv'd.

XAN-

XANTIPPE.

Ay, for a thouſand ridiculous diſcourſes of this kind the poor man has loſt his life: indeed, my dear, you will break my heart; I cou'd ſtrangle all the judges with my own hands. I did uſe to ſcold you indeed, but I always lov'd you notwithſtanding; theſe polite well-bred gentlemen have put you to death: O my dear dear huſband!

SOCRATES.

Be calm, my good Xantippe; weep not, my friends; it becomes not the diſciples of Socrates to ſhed tears.

CRITO.

How can we avoid it on ſo dreadful an occaſion? this legal murther!

SOCRATES.

Thus it is that men will often behave to the worſhippers of one true God, and the enemies of ſuperſtition.

CRITO.

And muſt Socrates be one of thoſe unhappy victims?

SOCRATES.

'Tis noble to be the victim of the deity: I die contented. I wiſh indeed that, to the ſatisfaction of ſeeing you, my friends, I cou'd have added the happineſs of embracing Sophronimus and Aglae: I wonder they

are not here: they wou'd have made my laſt moments more welcome.

CRITO.

Alas! they know not that you have already undergone the judges dreadful ſentence: they have been talking to the people, and praiſing thoſe magiſtrates who wou'd have acquitted you. Aglae has laid open the guilt of Anitus, and publiſh'd his ſhame and diſhonour: they perhaps might have ſaved your life: O dear Socrates, why wou'd you thus precipitate your fate?

SCENE the laſt.

To them enter AGLAE, SOPHRONIMUS.

AGLAE.

Divine Socrates, be not afraid: be comforted, Xantippe: worthy diſciples of Socrates, do not weep.

SOPHRONIMUS.

Your enemies are confounded: the people riſe in your defence.

AGLAE.

We have been talking to them; we have laid open the intrigues and jealouſy of the wicked Anitus: it was my duty to demand juſtice for his crime, as I was the cauſe of it.

SO-

SOPHRONIMUS.

Anitus hath ſav'd himſelf by flight from the rage of the people: he and his accomplices are purſued: ſolemn thanks have been given to thoſe judges who appear'd in your favor: the people are now at the gates of the priſon, and wait to conduct you home in triumph.

XANTIPPE.

Alas! 'tis loſt labour!

One of the Diſciples.

O Socrates, why wou'd you ſo haſtily obey?

AGLAE.

Live, dear Socrates, the benefactor of your country, the model of future ages; O live for the general happineſs of mankind!

CRITO.

Ye noble pair, my virtuous friends, it is too late.

XANTIPPE.

You ſtay'd too long.

AGLAE.

Alas! too late! what mean you? juſt heav'n!

SOPHRONIMUS.

Has he then already drank the fatal draught?

SOCRATES.

Sweet Aglae, and dear Sophronimus, the law ordain'd that I ſhou'd take the poiſon: I obey'd the law, unjuſt as it is, becauſe it oppreſſed myſelf alone: had the injuſtice been done to another, I wou'd have reſiſted it. I go to death, but the example of friendſhip which you give the world, and your nobleneſs of ſoul ſhall never periſh: your virtue is greater, much greater, than the guilt of thoſe who accus'd me. I bleſs that fate which the world may call misfortune, becauſe it hath ſet in the faireſt light the goodneſs of your hearts. My dear Xantippe, be happy; and remember, that to be ſo, you muſt curb your impetuous temper. My beloved diſciples, liſten always to the voice of that philoſophy which will teach you to deſpiſe your perſecutors, and pity human weakneſs: and you, my daughter Aglae, and my ſon Sophronimus, be always what you now are.

AGLAE.

How wretched are we that we cannot die for you!

SOCRATES.

Your lives are valuable, mine wou'd have been uſeleſs: take my tender laſt farewel; the doors of eternity are open'd to receive me.

XAN-

XANTIPPE.

He was a great man! O I will rouſe up the whole nation.

SOPHRONIMUS.

May we raiſe up temples to Socrates, if ever mortal man deſerv'd it!

CRITO.

At leaſt may his wiſdom teach mankind, that temples ſhou'd be rais'd to God alone!

END of the THIRD and LAST ACT.

ALZIRA:

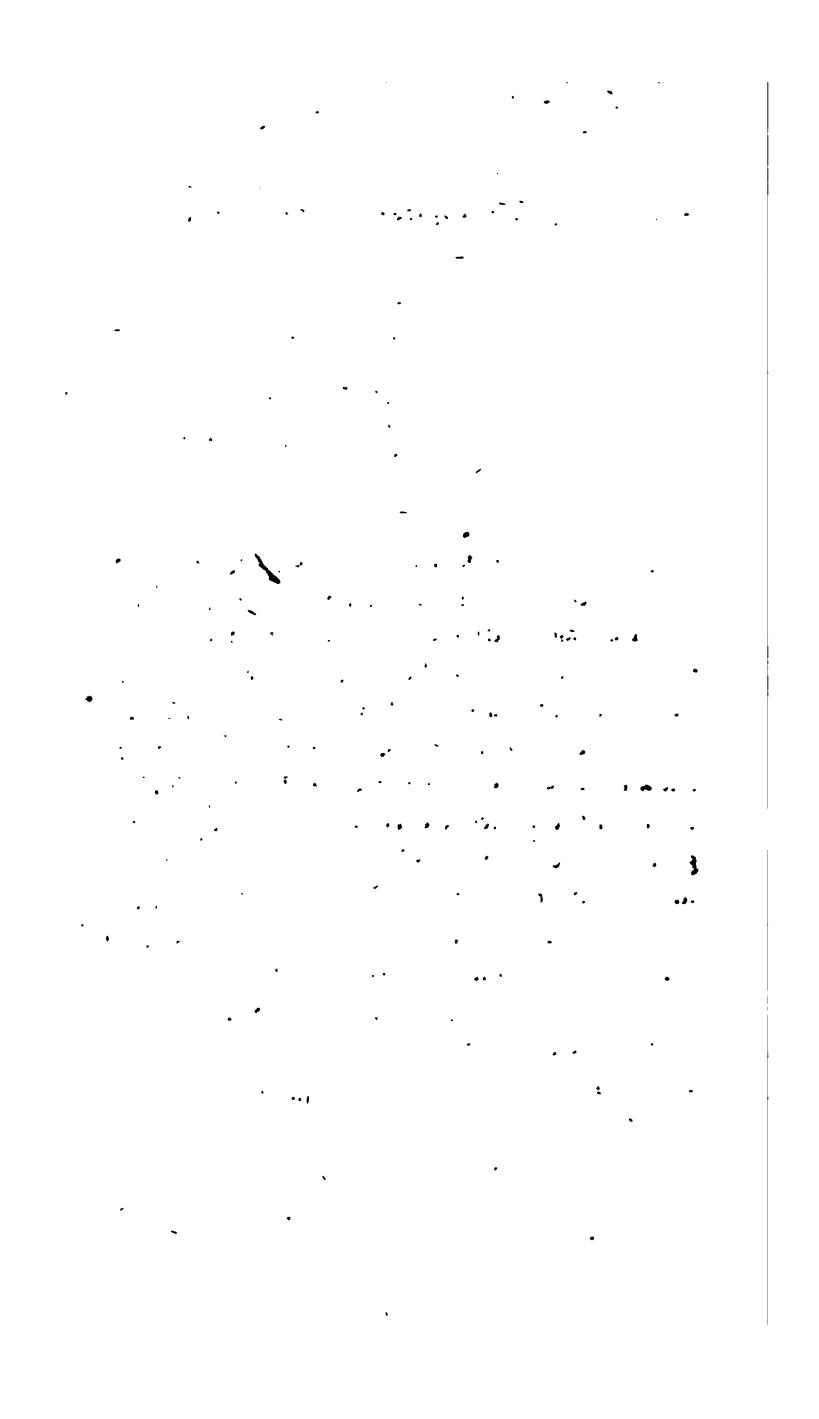
OR, THE

AMERICANS.

A

TRAGEDY.

Repreſented *Jan.* 27, 1736.



LETTER

TO THE

MARCHIONESS of CHASTELLET.

MADAM,

HOW contemptible a preſent for the marchioneſs of *Chaſtellet*, is one of theſe pieces of poetry, which owing all their merit to the tranſitory favour of the public, and theatrical deluſion, are written but for a day, and ſoon ſink into oblivon! What indeed is a a novel put into verſe, and repreſented on the ſtage, to one who reads works of Geometry with as much eaſe as others read Romances; to her who finds in *Locke*, that great preceptor of mankind, nothing but her own opinion and the hiſtory of her own thoughts; what can it be, in ſhort, to one who, born to enjoy the pleaſures of life, quits them all for the ſake of truth?

But the greateſt genius, madam, and doubtleſs the moſt deſirable, is he who excludes none of the fine arts, they all improve and delight the mind; is there

one of them therefore we ſhou'd wiſh to deprive ourſelves of? happy are thoſe few whom Philoſophy doth not ſower, nor the Belles-Lettres enervate: who can learn fortitude of *Locke*, and acquire knowledge from *Clark* and *Newton*, improve and exalt their minds by the ſtudy of *Cicero* and *Boſſuet* and adorn them with the charms of *Virgil* and *Taſſo!*

Such is the marchioneſs of *Chaſtellet*: I am not afraid, madam, to ſay this, tho' I know you are unwilling to hear it. Your example ſhou'd teach thoſe of the ſame ſex, and the ſame rank, that the nobleſt may become more noble by the improvement of their reaſon, and that wit and ſenſe give new charms to beauty. There was a time in *France*, and indeed in every part of *Europe*, when both men and women thought learning unbecoming, and that to ſearch for knowledge and inſtruction, was going out of their ſphere; the former thought themſelves born only for war, or idleneſs; the latter for nothing but coquettry.

The ridicule which *Moliere* and *Deſpreaux* threw on learned women, ſeem'd to juſtify in a more refined age the prejudices of barbariſm; but *Moliere*, that great legiſlator in morality and decorum, certainly never meant by his attack on learned women, to laugh at wit and wiſdom; he only ſatiriſ'd the abuſe and affecta-

tion

tion of them, in like manner as in his *Tartuffe* he cenſured hypocriſy and not virtue.

If inſtead of writing a ſatire on the ſex, the exact, ſolid, laborious, and elegant *Deſpreaux*, had conſulted ſome of the moſt ſenſible women about the court, he wou'd have added to the art and merit of his highly-finiſh'd works, a grace and beauty which wou'd have made them infinitely more agreeable; in vain does he endeavour to ridicule a lady for learning Aſtronomy, he had better have learn'd it himſelf.

Philoſophy has made ſuch a progreſs in *France* within theſe forty years paſt, that, were *Boileau* now living, he who took the liberty to laugh at a woman of the firſt rank, becauſe ſhe was privately viſited by *Roberval* and *Sauveur*, wou'd now be oblig'd to reſpect and to imitate thoſe who publicly receive inſtructions from our *Maupertuis*, *Reaumurs*, *Mairans*, *Dufays*, and *Clairauts*, from all thoſe truly learned men, who teach a moſt uſeful ſcience, and who, by rendering it pleaſant and agreeable, make it inſenſibly neceſſary to this nation. I will venture to ſay, we live at a time when a Poet muſt be a Philoſopher, and a woman may ſafely be one.

In the beginning of the laſt age, the *French* learn'd only to range their words: at length the age of things is arriv'd: ſhe who formerly read *Montagne*, the *Aſtrée*, and

and the *Tales of the Queen of Navarre*, was called a learned woman. *Deſhoullieres* and *Dacier*, both excellent in their ſeveral ways, appear'd ſome time after; but your ſex has receiv'd yet more honour from thoſe who had taſte enough to reliſh that charming book, the *Plurality of Worlds*, and *Dialogues on Light*, a work perhaps not inferior to the other.

It is true indeed, that a woman who ſhould neglect the duties of her family and ſtation to cultivate the ſciences would be blamable, even though ſhe made the moſt conſiderable progreſs in them; but the ſame ſpirit that leads to the knowledge of truth, will inſtruct us in the performance of every duty. The queen of *England*, wife of *George* II. who was mediatrix between the two greateſt metaphyſicians in *Europe*, *Clark* and *Leibnitz*, and who was able to determine the merits of them both, never on that account neglected for a moment the duties of a queen, a mother, and a wife. *Chriſtina*, who quitted the throne for the polite arts, was ranked amongſt the greateſt ſovereigns whilſt ſhe held the reins of empire; and has not the grand-daughter of the immortal *Condé*, in whom we ſee reviv'd the ſpirit of her grand-father, added new dignity to the blood from whence ſhe ſprang?

You,

You, madam, whoſe name deſerves to be plac'd with theirs, have done the ſame honour to literature, by cultivating every part of it, which is your conſtant employment, at a time of life generally dedicated to pleaſures of another kind. You have done ſtill more; you conceal this extraordinary merit with as much care and aſſiduity as you acquir'd it: continue, madam, to cultivate the ſciences, whilſt that bright flame which you in vain endeavour to hide will break forth in ſpite of yourſelf. Shou'd thoſe who have long diſpens'd their favours in ſecret renounce their charity, when it is become public? Why bluſh at your own merit? a mind adorn'd like yours is a new empire, the arts are ever ambitious of the ſovereign's protection; to have beauty for their patroneſs is ſtill more ſerviceable.

Permit me to add, that one reaſon why we ſhou'd eſteem women of letters is, that they read and ſtudy from taſte and inclination only; they conſider it as an addition to their pleaſures, and in that they are certainly commendable: whilſt, with regard to us men, we muſt acknowledge, that it is often from vanity, or intereſt, that we ſpend our lives in the improvement of arts: we make them but the inſtruments to advance our fortune, which is a kind of profanation. I am ſorry

to

to hear *Horace* ſay of himſelf, * *Poverty made me a Poet.* The ruſt of envy, the artifice of intrigue, the poiſon of calumny, the aſſaſſination of ſatire, (if I may venture to call it ſo,) diſhonour and diſgrace a profeſſion which of it ſelf hath ſomething in it almoſt divine.

For me, madam, led by an invincible inclination to the arts from my earlieſt years, I always admir'd thoſe words which I have often repeated to you, of *Cicero*, the father of his country, of liberty and of eloquence, "Letters are the inſtruction of youth, and the delight "of old age; an ornament in proſperity, in adver- "ſity a comfort and a relief; at home always agree- "able, abroad never troubleſome, in town or country, "night and day; at every hour, and in every place, "they are the trueſt happineſs in life." †

I have always lov'd them for their own ſakes, but now I cultivate them for yours, madam, that I may deſerve, if poſſible, the happineſs of ſpending the remainder of my life with you in retirement, in the boſom of peace, and in the ſearch of that truth for which

* —— paupertas impulit audax
Ut verſus faterem.
HOR. Epiſt. lib. 2. v. 51.

† Hæc Studia adoleſcentiam alunt, ſenectutem oblectant, ſecundas res ornant, adverſis perfugium, ac ſolatium præbent; delectant domi, non impediunt foris, pernoctant nobiſcum, peregrinantur, ruſticantur.

which you, in the bloom of youth, have ſacrificed all the falſe enchanting pleaſures of the world, that I may one day, in ſhort, have it in my power to ſay with *Lucretius*, that poet and philoſopher, whoſe beauties and whoſe faults you are ſo well acquainted with.

* —— 'Tis pleaſant to behold from far
The moving legions mingled in the war;
But much more ſweet thy lab'ring ſteps to guide
To virtue's heights, with wiſdom well ſupply'd,
And all the magazines of learning fortify'd;
From thence to look below on human kind
Bewilder'd in the maze of life, and blind.

I will add nothing to this long epiſtle concerning the tragedy which I have the honour to dedicate to you; how indeed, madam, can I ſpeak of that, after having talk'd of you? All I can ſay is, that it was written in your houſe, and under your eye: I have endeavor'd to make it leſs unworthy of you by novelty,

* Sed nil dulcius eſt bene quam munita tenere
Edita doctrina ſapientum templa ſerena;
Deſpicere unde queas alios, paſſimque videre
Errare, atque viam palantes quærere vitæ;
Certare ingenio, contendere nobilitate;
Noctes atque dies niti præſtante labore
Ad ſummas emergere opes, rerumque potiri.
O miſeras hominum mentes! O pectora cæca!
LUCRET. L. 2. line 7.

truth,

truth, and virtue, by ſetting forth that generous way of thinking, that humanity, that nobleneſs of ſoul, which is always pardoning evil, and doing good; thoſe ſentiments ſo ſtrongly recommended by the ſages of antiquity, refined and improved by our own holy religion, thoſe true laws of nature, for the moſt part ſo ſeldom obey'd; you have corrected many faults in this piece, and know but too well how many ſtill remain in it; may the public, whoſe ſeverity will be proportion'd to its former indulgence, be as favourable to my errors as you have been!

* May the work which I dedicate to you at leaſt boaſt of longer life than the reſt of my performances! were it worthy of her to whom it is addreſs'd, it would be immortal.

I am, madam, with the profoundeſt reſpect, &c.

---

* All this was not merely an idle compliment, like moſt epiſtles dedicatory. The author did actually paſs twenty years of his life with this celebrated lady, in the ſtudy of Philoſophy and the Belles-Lettres; and whilſt ſhe lived he would by no means have her, though invited by a king, as appears by ſeveral letters printed in the third volume of this edition.

PRE-

PREFACE.

THIS Tragedy, the fable of which is invented, and almoſt of a new ſpecies, was written with a view of ſhewing how far ſuperior the ſpirit of true religion is to the light of nature. The religion of a barbarian conſiſts in offering up to his gods the blood of his enemies; a Chriſtian badly inſtructed has ſeldom much more humanity: to be a ſtrict obſerver of ſome unneceſſary rites and ceremonies, and at the ſame time deficient in the moſt eſſential duties, to ſay certain prayers at particular times, and carefully to conceal his vices; this is his religion: that of a true Chriſtian, is to look upon all mankind as his brethren, to do them all the good in his power, and pardon their offences: ſuch is *Guzman* at the hour of death, and *Alvarez* during the whole courſe of his life; ſuch a man was Henry IV. as I have deſcribed him, even with all his foibles: in every part of my writings I have endeavoured to enforce that humanity which ought to be the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of a thinking being: the reader will always find in them (if I may venture to ſay ſo much of my own works) a deſire

a deſire to promote the happineſs of all men, and an *abhorrence* of injuſtice and oppreſſion: it is this, and this alone, which hath hitherto ſaved them from that obſcurity to which their many imperfections would otherwiſe long ſince have condemned them: it was this which ſupported the *Henriade*, in ſpite of all the efforts of ſome jealous Frenchmen, who were reſolved abſolutely to deny that France could ever be capable of producing an epic poem: but there are always a few readers who will not ſuffer their judgments to be tainted by the poiſon of cabals and intrigues; who love truth alone, and always look for the man in the author, with whom I found favour: to theſe few unprejudiced judges I beg leave to addreſs the following reflections, and hope they will forgive that neceſſity which obliges me to make them.

A ſtranger at Paris was greatly aſtoniſhed the other day at meeting with a heap of libels of various kinds, and a cruel combination againſt a poor man that grievouſly oppreſſed him: certainly, ſaid he, this man muſt have been very ambitious, muſt have endeavoured to raiſe himſelf to ſome of thoſe exalted poſts that ſtir up the envy of mankind. No, it was replied, he is nothing but an obſcure retired citizen, who keeps company with *Virgil* and *Locke* more than any of his country-

countrymen, whoſe very perſon is as little known to ſome of his enemies, as to the graver who pretended to engrave his picture : he is the author of ſome pieces that have drawn tears from your eyes ; of ſome performances, in which, in ſpite of all their faults, you admire that love of humanity, juſtice, and liberty, which reigns through every one of them : thoſe who calumniate him are, for the moſt part, men even more obſcure than himſelf, who quarrel with him only for a little idle breath of fame, and who will perſecute him as long as he lives, only becauſe he has given you pleaſure. The ſtranger was touched with indignation againſt the perſecutors, and felt ſome pity for the unhappy man who was thus perſecuted.

It is hard indeed, that we cannot obtain that of our own countrymen and cotemporaries, which we have reaſon to expect from ſtrangers and from poſterity : very cruel, and at the ſame time very diſgraceful it is to human wit, that literature ſhould be infected with theſe perſonal animoſities, theſe cabals and intrigues, which the ſlaves of fortune alone ſhou'd be tormented with. What do authors get by tearing one another to pieces ? they bring contempt and ignominy on a profeſſion, which, but for themſelves, wou'd always be reſpectable : how melancholy a conſideration is it to

reflect'

reflect, that the art of thinking, the nobleſt priviledge of mankind, ſhou'd become the ſource of ridicule; and that men of wit, who often by their quarrels make themſelves the jeſt of fools, ſhou'd only be the buffoons of the public, when they ought to be the maſters of it?

Virgil, *Varius*, *Pollio*, *Horace* and *Tibullus* were friends; the monuments of their friendſhip ſtill ſubſiſt, to teach mankind that great minds ſhou'd always be united. If we cannot attain to the excellency of their genius, may we not at leaſt imitate their virtues? Thoſe illuſtrious men, on whom the eyes of the whol univerſe were fixed, who contended for the admiration of *Aſia*, *Africa*, and *Europe*, lov'd one another notwithſtanding, and liv'd together as brethren; whilſt we, confined as we are within this narrow theatre, we whoſe names, ſcarce known in one obſcure corner of the world, will ſoon paſs away like our faſhions, and be heard of no more, quarrel and fight with each other for a flaſh of fame, that is ſcarce ſeen by a creature beyond our own little horizon. We live as it were in a time of general famine, and prey upon one another. *Virgil* and *Horace* had no diſſenſions, becauſe they liv'd in a land of plenty.

I have ſeen a book, entituled, *de morbis artificum*, on the *diſeaſes* of *artiſts*: the moſt incurable of them all

all is this meanneſs and jealouſy; but the worſt of all is, that intereſt has often a greater ſhare even than envy in theſe little ſatirical pamphlets, with which we are ſo over-run. It is not long ago ſince a fellow, who had wrote an infamous libel againſt his friend and benefactor, being aſk'd how he cou'd be guilty of ſo much ingratitude, reply'd with all the indifference in the world, * I muſt live.

Whatever may be the cauſe of this ſhameful practice, certain it is, that when a man is attack'd, merely on account of his writings, he ſhou'd by no means think of anſwering the criticiſms; for if they are juſtly founded, he has nothing to do but to correct his works; and if they are not, they will periſh as ſoon as they are born. Let us call to mind the fable of *Boccalini*. "A traveller, ſays he, was diſturb'd in his "journey by the noiſe of graſhoppers; he ſtopp'd with "a reſolution to deſtroy them all, but to no purpoſe, "it only led him out of his way: he ought to have "proceeded peaceably on his journey, the graſhoppers "wou'd all have died of themſelves in a week's time."

The author ſhou'd always forget himſelf, the man never; *ſeipſum deſerere turpiſſimum eſt*. Thoſe who

* This anſwer was made by the Abbè des *Fontaines* to the count *D'Argenſon*, ſecretary of ſtate for military affairs.

have

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DON GUZMAN, Governor of Peru.

DON ALVAZEZ, } Father of Guzman, the late Governor.

ZAMOR, Sovereign of a Part of Potosi.

MONTEZUMA, Sovereign of another Part.

ALZIRA, Daughter of Montezuma.

EMIRA, CEPHALE. } Attendants on Alzira.

SPANISH Officers.

AMERICANS.

SCENE, LIMA.

ALZIRA.

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

ALVAREZ, GUZMAN.

ALVAREZ.

AT length, for ſo the council hath decreed,
Guzman ſucceeds Alvarez; long, my ſon,
May'ſt thou preſerve for heav'n and for thy king
This better half of our new conquer'd world,
This fortile ſource of riches and of crimes!
Joyful to thee I yield the poſt of honour,
That ſuits but ill with feeble age like mine;
In youth thy father trod the paths of glory;
Alvarez firſt our winged caſtles bore
To Mexico's aſtoniſh'd ſons; he led

Spain's gallant heroes to this golden ſhore:
After a life ſpent in my country's ſervice,
Cou'd I have form'd theſe heroes into men,
Cou'd I have made them virtuous, mild, and good,
I had been amply paid for all my toils:
But who ſhall ſtop the haughty conqueror?
Alas! my ſon, their cruelties obſcure
The luſtre of their fame; I weep the fate
Of theſe unhappy victors, ras'd by heav'n
To greatneſs but to be ſupremely wicked.
O Guzman, I am verging to the grave,
Let me but live to ſee thee govern here
As juſtice ſhall direct thee, and I die
With pleaſure.

GUZMAN.

By thy great example fir'd,
With thee I fought and conquer'd for my country;
From thee muſt learn to rule: it is not mine
To give the wiſe and good Alvarez laws,
But to receive them from him.

ALVAREZ.

No; my ſon,
The ſov'reign pow'r can never be divided:
Worn down with years and labour, I reſign
All worldly pomp; it is enough for me

If yét my feeble voice be ſometimes heard
To counſel and direct thee; truſt me, Guzman,
Men are not creatures one wou'd wiſh to rule:
To that almighty being, whom too long
I have neglected, wou'd I conſecrate
My poor remains of life; one boon alone,
As friend, I aſk of thee, as father claim;
To give me up thoſe ſlaves who by your order
Are here confin'd; this day, my ſon, ſhou'd be
A day of pardon, mark'd by clemency,
And not by juſtice.

GUZMAN.

A requeſt from you
Is a command; but think, my lord, I beg,
What dangers may enſue: a ſavage people,
But half ſubdued, and to the yoke of ſlav'ry
Bending reluctant, ready for revolt,
Shou'd never be familiar with their conqu'rors;
Or dare to look on thoſe they ſhou'd be taught
To tremble at: unarm'd with pow'r and vengeance
They wou'd deſpiſe us; theſe untutor'd Indians,
Fiery and bold, ill brook the galling rein
Of ſervitude, by chaſtiſement alone
Made tame, and humble, pardon'd once, they think
You fear 'em; pow'r, in ſhort, is loſt by mildneſs;

Severity alone enſures obedience.
The brave Caſtilian ſerves in honour's cauſe,
With chearful reſignation, 'tis his pride,
His glory; but inferior nations court
Oppreſſion; force and only force conſtrains them:
Did not the gods of theſe barbarians drink
The blood of men, they wou'd not be ador'd.

ALVAREZ.

And can a chriſtian, as thou art, approve
Theſe tyrant maxims, the deteſted offspring
Of narrow policy? are theſe the means
To win the wild barbarian to our faith?
Think'ſt thou to rule them with an iron hand,
And ſerve a God of peace with war and ſlaughter?
Brav'd I for this the burning tropic's rage,
And all the terrors of a world unknown,
To ſee our country curs'd, our faith diſgrac'd?
God ſent us here for other purpoſes,
Sent us to make his holy name revered,
His ſacred laws belov'd: whilſt we, my ſon,
Unmindful of that faith which we profeſs,
The laws we teach, and all the tender ties
Of ſoft humanity, inſatiate ſtill
For blood and gold, inſtead of winning o'er
Theſe ſavages by gentle means, deſtroy them.

All is confuſion, death, and horror round us,
And nought have we of heaven but its thunder;
Our name indeed bears terror with it; Spain
Is fear'd, but hated too: we are the ſcourge
Of this new world, vain, covetous, unjuſt;
In ſhort, I bluſh to own it, we alone
Are the barbarians here: the ſimple ſavage,
Tho' fierce by nature, is in courage equal,
In goodneſs our ſuperior. O my Guzman,
Had he, like us, been prodigal of blood,
Had he not felt the throbs of tender pity,
Alvarez had not liv'd to ſpeak his virtues:
Haſt thou forgot that day, when by a croud
Of deſp'rate natives I was circled in
On ev'ry ſide, and all my faithful band
Of followers cut off; alone I ſtood,
And ev'ry moment look'd for death, when, lo;
At mention of my name, they dropp'd their arms;
And ſtrait a young American approach'd me,
Embrac'd my knees, and bath'd 'em with his tears;
And "is it you, he cry'd, is it my friend?
"Live, good Alvarez, virtue pure as thine
"May be moſt uſeful to us; be a father
"To the unhappy; let thy tyrant nation,

" That wou'd enſlave us, learn from hence — to par-
don,
" And own a ſavage capable of virtue."
I ſee you're mov'd; O hearken to the voice
Of mild humanity, by me ſhe ſpeaks,
By me addreſſes Guzman; O my ſon,
Can'ſt thou expect the object of thy wiſhes,
The fair Alzira e'er will crown thy hopes,
If thou art cruel? think'ſt thou to cement
The deareſt bonds of nature in the blood
Of her lov'd countrymen, or ſhall their groans
Be heard, and Guzman ſoften into mercy?

GUZMAN.

'Tis your command, my lord, and I ſubmit;
They have their freedom, but on this condition,
For ſo our laws require, they muſt be chriſtians:
To quit their idols, and embrace our faith,
Alone can ſave 'em; we muſt bend by force
Their ſtubborn hearts, and drag 'em to the altar;
One king muſt be obey'd, one God ador'd.

ALVAREZ.

Hear me, my ſon, I wiſh, as much as Guzman,
That truth may fix her ſacred empire here,
That neither heav'n nor Spain henceforth may find

A foe on earth; but know, the heart oppreſs'd
Is never conquer'd: I force none, yet I
Have conquer'd many; the true God, my ſon,
The God of chriſtians is a God of mercy.

GUZMAN.

You've conquer'd, ſir, the father o'er his ſon
Is abſolute; and you, my lord, wou'd ſoften
The hardeſt heart, whilſt virtue by Alvarez
In mildeſt accents pleads her pow'rful cauſe:
O ſince kind heav'n to thee hath lent the art
Of ſoft perſuaſion, uſe it for thy ſon,
On thee alone depends the happineſs
Of Guzman's life: the proud Alzira ſcorns
My proffer'd hand: I love her but too well,
Heav'n knows how dearly! but I cannot ſtoop
Meanly to ſooth a haughty woman's pride,
I cannot make myſelf a poor tame ſlave
To her imperious will; but thou haſt pow'r
O'er the fair tyrant's father; talk to him
For the laſt time; let him command his daughter
To take my hand, and make your Guzman happy;
And yet it hurts my ſoul to think Alvarez
Shou'd ſtoop ſo low, and be a ſuppliant for me.

ALVAREZ.

Already I have ſpoke, and Montezuma
Hath ſeen his daughter; ſhe will ſoon be thine.
I've been a friend to his unhappy race,
And ſooth'd the ſorrows of captivity:
Already he hath quitted his falſe gods;
Alzira too, a convert to our faith,
To this new world ſhines forth a bright example.
She only can unite the jarring nations,
And make us happy; thy long wiſh'd-for nuptials
Shall join two diſtant globes; theſe fierce barbarians,
Who now deteſt our laws, when they ſhall ſee
The daughter of their king in Guzman's arms,
Chearful beneath thy eaſy yoke ſhall bend
Their willing hearts, and ſoon be all our own:
But Montezuma comes; away, my ſon,
Expect me with Alzira at the altar.

SCENE II.

ALVAREZ, MONTEZUMA.

ALVAREZ.

At length, obedient to a father's will,
Alzira yields, I hope, to thy perſuaſion.

MON-

MONTEZUMA.

If yet my daughter trembles at the thought
Of wedding him who has deſtroy'd her race,
Alvarez will forgive a woman's weakneſs;
For thou has been a father to the wretched:
Thy gentle manners teach us to revere
That holy faith from whence they ſprung; by thee
The will of heav'n to this new world reveal'd,
Enlighten'd our dark minds; what mighty Spain
Unconquer'd left, thy virtue has ſubdued:
Thy cruel countrymen's remorſeleſs rage
Had render'd ev'n thy God deteſtable,
But that in thee his great perfections ſhine,
His goodneſs, and his mercy; in thy heart
We trace his image; Montezuma's thine,
His daughter, and his houſe; the good Alvarez
Shall have them all: Potoſi and Peru,
With my Alzira, ſhall deſcend to Guzman:
Prepare the nuptial rites, adorn your temple,
And let your ſon be ready to receive her:
Methinks it is as if th'immortal beings
Had deign'd to viſit earth, and mix with men.

ALVAREZ.

O Montezuma, let me live to ſee
This bleſt event, and I ſhall die content.

O God, whoſe gracious hand conducted us
To this new world, enlighten and preſerve it;
Propitious ſmile on theſe firſt holy vows
Made at thy altar here! adieu, my friend,
To thee I owe my Guzman's happineſs.

SCENE III.

MONTEZUMA alone.

O thou true God, whoſe pow'rful arm deſtroy'd
Thoſe idle deities I once ador'd,
Watch o'er the poor remains of my ſad life,
And ſooth my ſorrows; I have loſt my all,
All but Alzira, O protect her youth,
Watch o'er her ſteps, and guide her tender heart!

SCENE IV.

MONTEZUMA, ALZIRA.

MONTEZUMA.

Daughter, the hour is come to make thyſelf
And the world happy, to command the conqu'ror,
And make the vanquiſh'd ſmile, reſtore thy country
To her loſt honour, and to regal pow'r
Riſe from the boſom of adverſity.
Alzira will obey, I know ſhe will;
Dry up thy tears, a father muſt not ſee them.

ALZI-

ALZIRA.

I have no will but yours; yet, O my lord,
See my deſpair, and look into my ſoul.

MONTEZUMA.

No more of that; thy word is paſs'd, Alzira,
And I depend on't.

ALZIRA.

'Twas extorted from me;
The cruel ſacrifice: is this a time
To plight my faith, and think of nuptial joy,
This hapleſs day, when all I held moſt dear
Was raviſh'd from me, when our wide-ſtretch'd empire
And all her hoſts, the children of the ſun,
Inglorious fell beneath the cruel Guzman?
O 'twas a day mark'd by the hand of heav'n
As moſt unfortunate.

MONTEZUMA.

Our days, Alzira,
Are happy or unhappy from ourſelves,
And not from circumſtance or accident,
As ſuperſtition taught our anceſtors
To credit; think no more on't.

ALZIRA.

On this day
My Zamor fell, our country's great avenger,
My lover, chos'n by thee, by thee, my father,
To be Alzira's huſband.

MONTEZUMA.

I have paid
The debt of ſorrow due to Zamor's aſhes,
And hold his mem'ry dear; but death has cancell'd
Your mutual bonds; therefore no longer ſhed
Thoſe fruitleſs tears, but carry to the altar
A free and chearful heart; thy God commands,
He calls thee to him; if thou art a chriſtian,
Now hear his voice.

ALZIRA.

Alas! my lord, I know
A father's pow'r, and know my duty to him,
'Tis to obey, to fall a ſacrifice
Before him; I have paſs'd the utmoſt bounds
Which nature e'er preſcribed; thy will alone
Hath been my law, nor did I ever ſtain
With diſobedience my true faith, for thee
I left my country's gods, and am a chriſtian:
Alas! my father, why wou'dſt thou deceive me,
Why tell me, the new deity I ſerve

Wou'd

Wou'd bring me peace, that his all-healing pow'r
Wou'd eaſe my tortur'd heart? deluſive promiſe!
For O my lord, the deadly poiſon ſtill
Lurks in my veins, ſtill Zamor's image dwells
In his Alzira's heart, nor time nor death
Can e'er efface it: well I know Alvarez
Condems that paſſion which he once approv'd:
But I will make him ample recompenſe
By my obedience: — wed me to the tyrant,
Give me to Guzman, 'tis a ſacrifice
I owe my country; but remember, ſir,
How dreadful 'tis, and tremble at the thought
Of ſuch unnat'ral, ſuch deteſted bonds,
Thou who condemn'ſt me to theſe fatal nuptials,
Who bid'ſt Alzira give her hand to Guzman,
And at the altar promiſe him a heart
Which is not hers to give.

MONTEZUMA.

What ſays my child?
O in the name of ev'ry tender tie
That binds thee to me, ſpare a wretched father!
Pity my age, and do not, by the woes
Which thou alone, Alzira, can'ſt remove,
Let me intreat thee, O embitter not
The ſad remainder of Alvarez' life!

Have

Have I not ever ſtrove to make thee happy,
And wilt thou not return it? O my daughter,
Let virtue guide thy ſteps in duty's path,
And lead thee on to bliſs! thy country calls,
Wilt thou betray her? learn henceforth, Alzira,
To be the miſtreſs of thyſelf.

ALZIRA.

And muſt I
Learn to diſſemble then? ungrateful taſk!

SCENE V.

GUZMAN, ALZIRA.

GUZMAN.

Theſe long delays, Alzira, are unkind,
And, let me add, ungen'rous, to the man
Who lives but to oblige you: for thy ſake
I ſtopp'd the hand of juſtice; all thoſe captives,
Whoſe pardon you ſolicited, are free:
But I ſhou'd bluſh to think that Guzman ow'd
Thy kind compliance to ſo poor a ſervice;
'Tis on thyſelf, and thy conſenting heart,
He founds his hopes, nor thought I e'er till now
My happineſs cou'd make Alzira wretched.

ALZIRA.

Wretched indeed! O grant, kind heav'n, this day
May not prove fatal to us both! you ſee
I am abaſh'd, confounded, left a prey
To horror and deſpair: do not theſe eyes
Alone betray the anguiſh of a mind
Oppreſs'd with grief? can'ſt thou not read it there?
I know thou canſt: ſuch is my nature, Guzman;
Ne'er did Alzira's face bely her heart:
Diſſimulation and diſguiſe, my lord,
Are European arts, which I abhor.

GUZMAN.

I love thy frankneſs, but lament the cauſe;
Zamor is ſtill belov'd, his mem'ry lives
Within thy breaſt, my rival ev'n in death:
This is too much, Alzira; duty, honour,
Virtue forbid it: weep no more, it wounds
My heart, and I am jealous of thy tears.

ALZIRA.

Jealous of him, my lord, who in the grave
Is mould'ring now, my lov'd, lamented Zamor?
For I confeſs I lov'd him, we were bound
By mutual vows, and ſtill I weep his fate:
If thou'rt a friend to conſtancy and truth,
Thou wilt not blame my paſſion, but approve it.

By

By this, and this alone, may Guzman gain
Alzira's heart.

SCENE VI.

GUZMAN alone.

Her pride aſtoniſhes,
And yet I know not how her freedom charms me:
There is a ſavage beauty in her heart
That ſuits the wildneſs of her native clime;
But ſofter manners may ſubdue her mind,
And bind her ſtubborn fierceneſs to the yoke
Of duty; Guzman now is lord of all,
And nought remains unconquer'd but Alzira:
Reſolv'd by force or art to make her mine,
Our hands, if not our hearts, ſhall be united.

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT II. SCENE I.

ZAMOR, Americans.

ZAMOR.

MY noble friends, and fellow ſufferers,
Whom dangers ſtrengthen, and misfortunes make

But

But more illuſtrious, ſhall we ne'er obtain
Or ſweet revenge, or honourable death?
Still muſt we live unable, or to ſerve
Alzira, or our country; ſhall we ne'er
Find out the hated Guzman, and deſtroy
That fell deſtroyer? O my country's gods,
Pow'rleſs and vain, ye gave up this fair land
Of liberty to hoſtile deities;
And tamely ſuffer'd a few wand'ring Spaniards
To ſpoil your altars, lay your temples waſte,
And deſolate our empire; I have loſt
A kingdom and Alzira; all is gone
But ſhame, and ſorrow, and reſentment, thoſe
I carry'd with me to the burning ſands
And gloomy deſarts; there I cheriſh'd long
The ſecret hopes of vengeance: you, my friends,
Reviv'd your drooping Zamor, and inſpir'd
His ſoul with flatt'ring thoughts of better days:
Deep in the foreſt's ſhade we left a band
Of choſen ſpirits, reſolute and bold,
And hither came, impatient to obſerve
The walls uprais'd by our tremendous foe,
They watch'd, and ſeiz'd us: in a dungeon long
Confin'd, at length our tyrant maſters grant us
Leave to walk forth, and breath the wholeſome air,

Yet

Yet will not deign to let us know our fate:
Can none inform me where we are, who dwells
Within this ſeat of ſorrow? where's Alzira,
Where's Montezuma, lives he, is he free,
Or a vile ſlave like Zamor? ſay, my friends,
And partners in affliction, know ye not?

An American.

Like you, my lord, in chains, and hither led
By ſecret paths, we're ignorant of all:
Great Cacique, worthy of a better fate,
If 'tis decreed that thou muſt fall, at leaſt
Thou ſhalt find friends prepar'd to periſh with thee,
And own them not unworthy of their maſter.

ZAMORE.

After a glorious victory, my friends,
A glorious death is moſt to be deſir'd;
But O, to die in vile obſcurity,
To periſh thus in ignominious bondage,
To leave our bleeding country thus enſlav'd
By European robbers, thoſe aſſaſſins
Whoſe thirſt for blood and gold, theſe proud uſurpers,
Who would extort by ev'ry cruel art
Of puniſhment thoſe riches which we hold
More cheap, more worthleſs than themſelves, to leave
My lov'd Alzira, Zamor's dearer half,

To

To their licentious fury, O my friends,
'Tis worſe than death: I tremble at the thought.

SCENE II.

ALVAREZ, ZAMOR, Americans.

ALVAREZ.

Live, and be free.

ZAMOR.

Good heav'n, what do I hear?
O unexpected ſound! what God art thou
In human ſhape? a Spaniard, and forgive!
It cannot be: art thou the ruler here?

ALVAREZ.

No, captive; I am only the protector
Of innocence oppreſs'd.

ZAMOR.

Thou good old man,
What is thy office here?

ALVAREZ.

To aid the wretched.

ZAMOR.

What could inſpire thee with a thought ſo noble?

ALVAREZ.

My gratitude, religion, and my God.

ZAMOR.

ZAMOR.

God and religion! what! theſe cruel tyrants,
Theſe ruffians, that ſtill bath'd in human blood
Diſpeople earth, and change the ſmiling face
Of nature to a dreary deſart, they
Who worſhip avarice alone! their God
Cannot be thine!

ALVAREZ.

It is the ſame, my ſon,
But they offend him, they diſgrace his name,
And are indeed more guilty; they abuſe
Their new-got pow'r: thou know'ſt their crime, but know
My duty too: twice hath the trav'lling ſun
Enlighten'd in his courſe our world and yours
Since a brave Indian, who he was I know not,
Stepp'd from amidſt his fellow-ſavages,
And ſav'd me from their fury; from that moment
I felt your ſorrows, pity'd your misfortunes,
And held you as my brethren and my friends;
Cou'd I but meet my kind deliverer,
That gallant ſtranger, I ſhou'd die in peace.

ZAMOR.

His age, his features, his tranſcendent virtue,
All, all conſpire to ſay it is Alvarez:

Behold,

Behold, and mark us well; canſt thou diſtinguiſh
The hand that ſav'd thee?

ALVAREZ.

Gracious heav'n! come near,
O Providence! it is, it muſt be he,
The wiſh'd-for object of my gratitude;
He whom theſe eyes, grown dim with age, have ſought
So long in vain; my ſon, my benefactor,
What ſhall I do to ſerve thee? thou ſhalt live
With old Alvarez; he ſhall be thy father,
Thy guardian and protector here: kind heav'n
In gracious pity hath prolong'd my days,
That I might pay the debt I owe to thee.

ZAMOR.

O if thy barb'rous nation had poſſeſs'd
But half the virtues that adorn Alvarez,
Our willing world had bow'd ſubmiſſive down
Before them; but their ſouls are not like thine,
For they delight in blood, whilſt nature's ſelf
Abhorring ſhudders at their cruelty;
Death were more welcome far than life with them:
Urge me not therefore, good Alvarez, all
I wiſh to know is this, have they deſtroy'd
My noble friend, the wretched Montezuma,

where's

Where's my Alzira's father? O my lord,
Forgive theſe tears, the mem'ry of paſt griefs
Sits heavy on me.

ALVAREZ.

Let 'em flow my ſon,
'Tis the beſt mark of our humanity:
The heart that feels not for another's woe
Is fit for ev'ry crime: thy friend ſurvives,
And full of years and honours lives with us
In happineſs and peace.

ZAMOR.

Might I behold him?

ALVAREZ.

Yes; thou ſhalt ſee him ſoon: may his perſuaſion
Induce thee to think better of us all,
And follow his example!

ZAMOR.

Can he live
With chriſtians, Montezuma live with chriſtians?

ALVAREZ.

Have patience, ſon, and he ſhall tell thee all,
Touching our union, and the ſacred bonds
That ſoon ſhall bind in cords of amity
Our world to thine—but I muſt to my ſon,

And

And let him know my happineſs; I leave thee
But for a moment; fare thee well.

SCENE III.

ZAMOR, Americans.

At laſt
Heav'n ſeems to ſmile on Zamor; I have found
Amongſt theſe vile barbarians one juſt man,
Honeſt and true: Alvarez is a god,
Sent down from heav'n to ſoften this rude world,
And bleſs mankind: he ſaid he had a ſon,
That ſon ſhall be my brother and my friend,
If he is worthy of his noble father:
O glorious hope! ſhall I again behold
Great Montezuma after three long years?
Alzira too, my dear my lov'd Alzira,
Shall I embrace thee, haſt thou kept thy faith,
That firſt of virtues, to reward thy Zamor?
The heart oppreſs'd is ever diffident:
Another old man comes this way: my ſoul
Is ſtill perplex'd.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

MONTEZUMA, ZAMOR, Americans.

ZAMOR.

O noble Montezuma,
Do I once more embrace thee? ſee thy Zamor
Snatch'd from the jaws of death; he lives to ſave
And to defend his prince: behold thy friend,
Thy ſoldier, and thy ſon: O where's Alzira?
Be quick, and tell me, let me know her fate,
My life depends on that.

MONTEZUMA.

Unhappy Cacique,
With grief ſincere we have lamented thee;
Thy fellow ſoldiers to thy mem'ry rais'd
The decent tomb, and ev'ry honour paid
Due to thy virtues: but thank heav'n! thou liv'ſt,
Henceforth may happier days await thee, Zamor!
But ſay, why cam'ſt thou hither?

ZAMOR.

To revenge
My gods, myſelf, my father and Alzira.

MONTEZUMA.

What ſay'ſt thou?

ZAMOR.

ZAMOR.

Call to mind that dreadful day
When the fierce Spaniard, terrible in arms,
Rush'd through our pow'rless hosts, o'erthrew our bulwarks,
And laid our empire waste; his name was Guzman:
That name, thou well remember'st, was the signal
Giv'n for destruction; at that name they snatch'd
The sweet Alzira, thy lov'd daughter, from me,
And bore her to captivity with thee
And all thy race; destroy'd the holy altar,
Where I had hoped to make Alzira mine,
Then dragg'd me to the tyrant: shall I tell thee
What cruel torments that insatiate monster
Inflicted on me, to extort confession
Of hidden gold, the christian's deity,
Which we despise and trample on; half dead
They left me and retir'd: time, Montezuma,
Can never bury injuries like mine;
Thou see'st me here, prepar'd for great revenge:
Some chosen friends, attach'd to Zamor's cause,
By equal wrongs provok'd, with equal hate
Inspir'd, await me in the neighb'ring forest,
Resov'd with me to conquer or to die.

MONTEZUMA.

O Zamor, whither wou'd thy headlong paſſion
Tranſport thee? wherefore woud'ſt thou thus purſue
That death which ſeems ſo willing to avoid thee?
What can thy friends do for thee? their weak arms,
Their fiſh-bone ſpears, their ſabres made of ſtone,
Their ſoldiers naked, and ill-diſciplin'd,
Againſt theſe giants arm'd with mortal ſteel,
And launching their dread thunder bolts againſt thee?
Swift as the winds, their fiery courſers bear them
To certain victory; the world is theirs,
And we, my Zamor, muſt ſubmit.

ZAMOR.

Whilſt life
Shall animate theſe veins, I never will:
No, Montezuma: their deſtructive thunder,
Their coats of ſteel, their fiery coarſers taught
Like them to fight, and ſhare their maſter's glory,
This might affright, and terrify a while
Our gaping ſavages, but I behold
This pompous ſcene unruffled: to ſubdue
Our haughty foe one thing alone's requir'd,
And that is, not to fear them; novelty,
That conquers cowards, only has enſlav'd us:
Gold, that pernicious native of our ſoil,

Draws

Draws Europe hither, but defends us not
Againſt her; niggard nature has deny'd us
A nobler metal, her all-conqu'ring ſteel,
And giv'n it to barbarians; but kind heav'n,
In lieu of this indulgence, hath beſtow'd
Virtues on us which Europe never knew:
I come to fight and conquer for Alzira.

MONTEZUMA.

Urge it no more, my Zamor, heav'n declares
Againſt us, calm thy rage; the times are chang'd.

ZAMOR.

Chang'd, did'ſt thou ſay, my lord? it cannot be,
If Montezuma's heart is ſtill the ſame,
If my Alzira's faithful, if I live
Still in her memory. — thou turn'ſt aſide
And weep'ſt.

MONTEZUMA.

Unhappy Zamor!

ZAMOR.

Am I not
Thy ſon, our tyrants have not alter'd thee?
They cannot, ſure they cannot have corrupted
An old man's heart, and made it falſe as theirs?

MONTEZUMA.

I am not guilty, Zamor, nor are all
Theſe conqu'rors tyrants; ſome were ſent by heav'n
To guide our footſteps in the paths of truth,
To teach us arts unknown, immortal ſecrets,
The knowledge of mankind, the arts, my ſon,
To ſpeak, to think, to live, and to be happy.

ZAMOR.

O horrid! can'ſt thou praiſe theſe ruffians, whilſt
Thy daughter, thy Alzira, is their ſlave?

MONTEZUMA.

Zamor, Alzira's free.

ZAMOR.

Ha! Montezuma,
Alzira free? forgive me, but remember,
She's mine, my lord, by every ſolemn tie;
You promis'd me, before the gods you promis'd,
To give her to me; they receiv'd our vows;
She is not perjur'd?

MONTEZUMA.

Call not on thoſe gods,
For they are vain, and fancy'd idols all;
I have abjur'd them, and henceforth muſt worſhip
That pow'r ſupreme which hath ſubdued them.

ZAMOR.

ZAMOR.

Ha!

The law of thy forefathers, thy religion,
Is that deſerted?

MONTEZUMA.

I have found its weakneſs,
And left its vain chimeras: may the God
Of Gods convert thee, and inſpire with truth
Thy unenlighten'd ſoul! unhappy Zamor,
Soon may'ſt thou know that Europe thou condemn'ſt,
Her virtues, and her faith!

ZAMOR.

What mighty virtues
Has ſhe to boaſt? thou art indeed a ſlave
If thou haſt loſt thy gods, thy faith, thy honour,
And broke thy ſacred word: Alzira too,
Has ſhe betray'd me? O take heed!

MONTEZUMA.

My heart
Reproaches me for nothing: fare thee well!
I bleſs my own good fate, and weep for thine.

ZAMOR.

If thou art falſe, thou'ſt cauſe to weep indeed:
Pity the torments which I feel for thee,

And for thy guilt; pity a heart diſtracted
By love and vengeance; let me find out Guzman,
Let me behold Alzira, let me fall
Beneath her feet; O do not hide her from me:
Conduct me, urge me not thus to deſpair,
Put on a human heart, let thy loſt virtue——

SCENE V.

MONTEZUMA, ZAMOR, Guards.

Guard. [To Monteruma.

The ceremony waits, my lord.

MONTEZUMA.

I come.

ZAMOR.

Thou wilt not leave me? tell me, Montezuma,
What ceremony's this?

MONTEZUMA.

No more: away,
And leave this fatal place.

ZAMOR.

Though heav'n itſelf
Forbade me, I wou'd follow thee.

MONTEZUMA.

Forgive
My rude denial, Zamor, but you muſt not,

I ſay you muſt not—guards, prevent him—pagans
Muſt not profane our chriſtian altars; I
Command not here, but Guzman ſpeaks by me;
You muſt obey: farewell.

SCENE VI.

ZAMOR. Americans.

ZAMOR.

What do I hear?
Guzman? O ſhameful treaſon! Montezuma
The ſlave of Guzman! where is virtue fled?
Alzira too, is my Alzira guilty?
Has ſhe too drank corruption's pois'nous bowl
From theſe vile chriſtians?—that deſtroyer Guzman
Rules here, it ſeems; what's to be done?

First American.

Permit me
To counſel you, my lord; the good old man
Who ſav'd thee with his ſon will ſoon return,
He can deny you nothing; aſk of him
Safe conduct to the city gates; that done,
We may return and join our noble friends
Againſt the foe: I doubt not of ſucceſs:
We will not ſpare a man of them except
Alvarez, and his ſon: I've mark'd, my lord,

With moſt obſervant eye, their foſſes, ramparts,
And brazen thunders, European arts
That fright not me: alas! our countrymen
Forge their own ſhameful chains; and tamely bend
Beneath theſe ſons of pride; but ſoon, my lord,
When they ſhall ſee their great avenger here,
Then will they riſe indignant, and deſtroy
This ignominious work of ſlavery:
Yes; on the bleeding bodies of our foes
We'll make a path to glory; on the heads
Of theſe vile chriſtians turn the fiery tempeſt,
And with their own deſtructive inſtruments
Of murther ſhake this all-uſurping pow'r,
Founded by pride on ignorance and fear.

ZAMOR.

O how I joy, ye great unfortunate,
To find your kindred breaſts thus nobly beat
With ſympathetic fury! let us puniſh
The haughty Guzman, let his blood atone
For our loſt country's: O thou deity
Of injur'd mortals, ſweet revenge, O come,
Aſſiſt thy ſervants, let but Guzman periſh
And we are ſatisfy'd! but O my friends
We talk of vengeance, yet are captives ſtill,
Still groan beneath the yoke of ſhameful bondage:

Deſerted

Deſerted by Alvarez, and betray'd
By Montezuma, all I love perhaps
Is in the pow'r of him whom moſt I hate,
The only comfort left me is—to doubt.
But hark! what noiſe is that? the torches flame
On ev'ry ſide, and yield a double day:
This barb'rous people's brazen thunder ſpeaks
Some horrid rites, or pompous ſacrifice
Preparing; look around, and ſee if Zamor
Shall ſave his much-lov'd friends, or periſh with them.

END of the SECOND ACT.

ACT III. SCENE I.

ALZIRA alone.

YE manes of my dear departed Zamor,
Forgive me, O forgive the wife of Guzman!
The holy altar hath receiv'd our vows,
And they are ſeal'd in heav'n: purſue me not,
Indignant ſhade! O if Alzira's tears,
Her bitter anguiſh, her remorſe, the pangs
Of her reluctant ſoul, can reach the dead,
If in a happier world thou ſtill retain'ſt

Thy gen'rous noble ſpirit, thou wilt pardon
My weakneſs; 'twas a father's cruel will,
A people's happineſs requir'd it of me;
Cou'd I refuſe the dreadful ſacrifice?
Thou art at peace, my Zamor, do not thus
Diſtract my ſoul, but leave me to my fate;
Alas! already it has coſt me dear.

SCENE II.

ALZIRA, EMIRA.

And ſhall I not behold my countrymen,
The lov'd companions of my infant years,
Thoſe wretched captives, may I not enjoy
The mournful privilege to mix with theirs
My friendly tears, and mourn their cruel fate?

EMIRA.

O madam, we have cauſe indeed to weep,
To dread the wrath of Guzman, to lament
And tremble for our country; for the hour
Of ſlaughter and deſtruction is at hand:
Again I ſaw the bloody flag diſplay'd,
The proud tribunal's met, and Montezuma
Is ſummon'd to appear: all dreadful omens!
What will become of us?

ALZIRA.

ALZIRA.

Unpitying heav'n!
I've been deceiv'd, betray'd :—cruel O Guzman!
Was it for this I gave him at the altar
My long reluctant hand? that fatal bond
I ſhall repent of to my lateſt hour:
O under what malignant ſtar, my father,
Mad'ſt thou theſe cruel, theſe deteſted nuptials?

SCENE III.

ALZIRA, EMIRA, CEPHANES.

CEPHANES.

One of thoſe ſlaves, whom this propitious day
Reſtor'd to freedom, begs admittance to you
In ſecret.

ALZIRA.

Let him enter; 'twill rejoice
My heart heart to ſee him; he and all his friends
Are welcome to Alzira: but why comes he
Alone?

CEPHANES.

Some ſecret labours in his breaſt,
Which you and only you, he ſays, muſt know.
'Twas he, it ſeems, whoſe heav'n-directed arm

Sav'd

Sav'd the good father of thy valiant lord,
The noble Guzman.

EMIRA.

He has fought you long;
But Montezuma's private orders were,
He ſhou'd not ſee you: melancholy ſits
On his dark brow, as if he were intent
On ſome great purpoſe.

CEPHANES.

Grief and anguiſh ſeem
To rack his ſoul: at mention of your name
He ſigh'd, and wept, as if yet ignorant
Of your new honours and the rank you bear.

ALZIRA.

Unworthy rank, and honours I deſpiſe!
Perhaps the hero knows my wretched race,
And is no ſtranger to Alzira's woes:
Perhaps he knew my Zamor; who can tell
But he might be a witneſs of his death,
And comes to tell the melancholy tale?
A dreadful duty! that wou'd but renew
A lover's pangs, and double my diſtreſs;
But let him come: I know not why my heart
Shou'd flutter thus; this hateful palace ever

Hath

Hath been a ſcene of ſad diſquietude
And trouble to me : bid him enter.

SCENE IV.

ALZIRA, ZAMOR, EMIRA.

ZAMOR.

Yes;
It is Alzira : is ſhe then reſtored ?

ALZIRA.

Such were his features, voice, and motion : heav'n !
It cannot be ; O Zamor !—O ſupport me.

[She faints.

ZAMOR.

'Tis he.

ALZIRA.

Ha ! Zamor at Alzira's feet ?
'Tis all deluſion.

ZAMOR.

No ; I live for thee,
And at thy feet reclaim thy plighted faith ;
O my Alzira, idol of my ſoul,
Wilt thou not hear me ? where are all thy vows,
The ſacred ties that bound us faſt together,
Thou haſt not broke them ?

ALZIRA.

Thou dear fatal object
Of grief and joy, of rapture and deſpair,
In what a dreadful moment haſt thou choſe
To meet Alzira? ev'ry word thou utter'ſt
But plunges a new dagger in my heart.

ZAMOR.

Thou weep'ſt, yet look'ſt on Zamor!

ALZIRA.

'Tis too late:

ZAMOR.

I know you thought me dead: e'er ſince that hour
Of terror, when thoſe European tyrants
Depriv'd me of my gods, my throne and thee,
I've been a poor unhappy wanderer.
Know'ſt thou, my love, that ſavage murth'rer, Guzman,
With ignominious ſtripes, and cruel torture,
Inſulted me; the huſband of thy choice,
Thy once lov'd happy Zamor, fell a prey
To ruffians:—how it wounds thy tender heart!
Thou burn'ſt with fierce reſentment of my wrongs,
And thou wilt join with Zamor to revenge them:
Some guardian god, propitious to our loves,

Sav'd

Sav'd me from death, that we might meet again
In happineſs: I hope Alzira's true:
Thou haſt not left thy gods, betray'd thy country,
Thou art not grown a falſe perfidious Spaniard?
They tell me I ſhall meet with Guzman here,
I come to free thee from that proud barbarian:
Thou lov'ſt me, my Alzira, and wilt give
The victim to my wrath.

ALZIRA.

Thou haſt been wrong'd;
Revenge thyſelf, and ſee thy victim—here.

ZAMOR.

What ſay'ſt thou?—ha! thy faith, thy vows—

ALZIRA.

No more,
But ſtrike—I merit not, or life or thee.

ZAMOR.

O cruel Montezuma! what thou told'ſt me
Was but too true.

ALZIRA.

And cou'd he tell thee all;
Nam'd he the wretch for whom I quitted Zamor?

ZAMOR.

ZAMOR.

He did not, durſt not name him; that remains
For thee: O ſpeak it: I ſhall be ſurpriz'd
At nothing.

ALZIRA.

Hear then all my guilt.

ZAMOR.

Alzira!

ALZIRA.

That Guzman ——

ZAMOR.

Gracious heav'n!

ALZIRA.

Thy murtherer,
Within this hour receiv'd my guilty hand;
He is — my huſband.

ZAMOR.

Guzman!

ALZIRA.

Montezuma,
Alvarez — they betray'd my eaſy youth,
And urg'd me to the deed: the loſt Alzira
Did at the chriſtian altar give up all
That ſhe held dear on earth, her gods, her country,
Her — Zamor: O by thoſe dear injur'd names
I beg thee, take this hated life.

ZAMOR.

ZAMOR.

Alzira,

Can it be true? is Guzman then thy husband?

ALZIRA.

To plead a father's undisputed right,
To say how long I struggled with my duty,
To number o'er the fruitless tears I shed
For three long years lamenting Zamor's death,
That still I lov'd thee, that I left in wrath
Those pow'rless gods that had deserted thee,
And from despair alone became a christian,
Perhaps might mitigate Alzira's crime;
But I disdain it, I acknowledge all,
Confess my guilt, and sue for punishment.
Who shall absolve the wretch whom love condemns?
Take then a life that is not worth my care
Without thee; dost thou not abhor me, Zamor?

ZAMOR.

No: if thou lov'st me still, thou art not guilty:
May I yet hope that Zamor has a place
In his Alzira's heart?

ALZIRA.

When old Alvarez
And Montezuma led me to the altar

I thought on Zamor, thought him then no more,
But rev'renc'd, but ador'd his memory:
Our tyrants, our uſurpers know I lov'd thee;
I told 'em all, told heav'n and earth, nay told
My huſband — and O take this laſt farewel,
I love thee ſtill.

ZAMOR.

Is this then our laſt hour
Of happineſs, and muſt we part ſo ſoon,
So lately met? O if the voice of love ——

ALZIRA.

'Tis Guzman and his father.

SCENE V.

ALVAREZ, GUZMAN, ZAMOR, ALZIRA, Attendants.

ALVAREZ. [To Guzman.

Son, behold
With thy Alzira ſtands my great preſerver,
My benefactor, my deliverer.
[To Zamor.
O noble youth, to thee I owe my life,
Let me embrace thee, be my ſecond ſon,
And ſhare the pleaſures of this happy day
With Guzman and Alvarez.

ZAMOR.

ZAMOR.

He thy ſon;
I Guzman then thy ſon, that proud barbarian?

ALZIRA.

Avert the terrors of this dreadful moment,
Indulgent heav'n!

ALVAREZ.

In what aſtoniſhment ——

ZAMOR.

How cou'd a father, brave and good, like thee
Be curs'd with ſuch a ſon?

GUZMAN.

Inſulting ſlave,
Who gave thee licenſe thus to ſpurn thy maſter?
Thou know'ſt not who I am.

ZAMOR.

I know thee well;
And thou among the wretches thou haſt made
Perhaps may'ſt one day meet the injur'd Zamor.

GUZMAN.

And art thou he?

ALVAREZ.

Ha! Zamor!

ZAMOR.

ZAMOR.

'Tis the ſame,
'Tis Zamor, whom thy cruel hand oppreſs'd
With ignominious tortures, he whoſe eye
Thou dar'ſt not meet; thou tyrant raviſher,
Com'ſt thou at laſt to rob me of my beſt
And deareſt treaſure? with thy ruthleſs ſword
Make ſure thy vengeance, and prevent the fate
Which thou deſerv'ſt, e'er Zamor, who preſerv'd
The father, ſhall chaſtiſe the guilty ſon.

ALVAREZ. [To Guzman.
What ſay'ſt thou, Guzman, can'ſt thou anſwer this?

GUZMAN.

It were beneath me; puniſhment alone
Shoud anſwer inſolence, and, but for thee,
E'er this he ſhou'd have met with it.
[Turning to Alzira.
You, madam,
For your own honour might have more regard,
If not for mine, than thus to parley with
A traitor: come, no more of this, Alzira,
Thy tears offend me: huſbands may be jealous;
Remember that and tremble.

ALZIRA. [To Guzman.
Cruel Guzman!
My kind protector,

Turning

(Turning to Alvarez.

Good Alvarez, hear me:

And thou,

[To Zamor.

In better days my dearest hope,

O look with pity on the loſt Alzira!

[Pointing to Zamor.

Behold the huſband whom my father choſe,
Long e'er this hapleſs country bow'd the neck
To European tyrants, Zamor fell,
So fame reported, and with him Peru,
Then firſt ſubdued: my wretched father, old
And full of ſorrows, to the chriſtian's God,
Forſaken by his own, indignant fled;
The chriſtian altar ſaw Alzira's hand
Giv'n to her lover's murth'rer: thy new faith,
Which yet I know not, may condemn Alzira,
But virtue will forgive me when I add,
That ſtill I love thee, Zamor; but my oath,
My marriage vow, raſh fatal marriage! ſays
I never muſt be thine—nor can I now
Be Guzman's—falſe to both, ye both have cauſe
To hate me: which of you will kindly end
My wretched being? Guzman's hand, already
Stain'd with the blood of my unhappy race,

Were

Were fitteſt to revenge the injur'd rights
Of honour and of love; be juſt for once,
And ſtrike the guilty.

GUZMAN.

Dar'ſt thou thus abuſe
The goodneſs thou deſery'ſt not? but remember
'Twas thy requeſt; thy puniſhment is ready:
My rival dies; — away with him.

ALAREZ.

Inhuman!
O ſtop, my ſon, conſider what is due
To him who ſav'd thy father — ye are both
My children — let that tender name inſpire
Your breaſts with pity for an aged father:
At leaſt —

SCENE VI.

ALVAREZ, GUZMAN, ALZIRA, ZAMOR, Don ALONZO, a Spaniſh officer.

ALONZO.

My lord, the foe is at our gates;
On ev'ry ſide their brazen bucklers ring
With barb'rous diſſonance: aloud they cry,
Revenge, and Zamor, whilſt with meaſured ſteps,
Solemn and ſlow, the cloſe-wedg'd phalanx moves,

As

As if theſe ſavages had learn'd from us
The arts by which we conquer'd them.

GUZMAN.

Away:
Let us be gone; my preſence ſoon ſhall teach
Theſe ſlaves their duty—heroes of Caſtille,
Ye ſons of vict'ry, this new world was made
To wear your chains, to fear, and to obey you.

ZAMOR.

To fear and to obey? 'tis falſe, proud Guzman;
Ye are but mortals like ourſelves, no more.

GUZMAN.

Guards, drag him hence.

ZAMOR.

[To the Spaniards ſurrounding him.
Ye dare not: are ye gods,
And muſt we worſhip deities thus bath'd
In our own blood?

GUZMAN.

Obey me, ſlaves.

ALZIRA.

My lord!

ALVAREZ.

Remember, ſon, that Zamor ſav'd thy father.

GUZ-

GUZMAN.

My lord, I ſhall remember your inſtructions,
You taught me how to conquer, and I fly
Once more to victory: farewell!

SCENE VII.

ALVAREZ, ALZIRA.

ALZIRA. [Kneeling.

My Lord,
Behold me at your feet, accept the homage
Due to thy virtues! Guzman's injur'd honour
Calls for revenge, Alzira was to blame;
But I was bound to Zamor by the ties
Of ſacred love, long e'er I knew thy ſon;
We cannot give our hearts a ſecond time:
Zamor had mine, and ever muſt preſerve it:
O he is good and virtuous, for he ſav'd
Thy life, Alvarez—O forgive me!

ALVAREZ.

Riſe
Alzira, I forgive and pity thee;
Feel as a father and a friend thy ſorrows,
Lament thy Zamor's fate, and will protect him:
But let the ſolemn vow thou mad'ſt to Guzman
Be grav'd within thy heart; thou art no longer

The

The miſtreſs of thyſelf: remember well
Thou art my daughter—Guzman was moſt cruel,
I know he was, but ſtill he is—thy huſband:
Perhaps he may relent; heav'n grant he may!

ALZIRA.

Alas! why art not thou my Zamor's father?

END of the THIRD ACT.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

ALVAREZ, GUZMAN.

ALVAREZ.

FOrtune, my ſon, has crown'd thee with ſucceſs,
Endeavour to deſerve it; do not ſtain
The laurel wreath with blood, but let fair mercy,
That adds new luſtre to the conqu'ror's glory,
Inſpire thy breaſt with pity; be a man,
A chriſtian, and forgive: Alvarez aſks thee
To pardon Zamor, ſhall a father plead
In vain? O Guzman, ſhall I never ſoften
Thy ſavage manners, never teach my ſon
To conquer hearts?

GUZMAN.

Alvarez has pierc'd mine
Moſt deeply; aſk my life, and it is yours,

But leave my honour, leave me my revenge;
How can I pardon Zamor, when I know
Alzira loves him?

ALVAREZ.

Therefore he deſerves
Thy pity more.

GUZMAN.

O to be pity'd thus,
And thus belov'd, Guzman wou'd die with pleaſure.

ALVAREZ.

With all that fierce reſentment, feel'ſt thou too
The pangs of jealouſy?

GUZMAN.

And can'ſt thou blame
An injur'd huſband? I have too much cauſe
For jealouſy, and yet thou pity'ſt not
Th'unhappy Guzman.

ALVAREZ.

Thou art wild, impetuous,
And bitter in thy wrath; Alzira's virtues
Deſerve a milder treatment; when oppos'd,
Her open heart, rough as her native ſoil,
Reſiſts with ſtubborn firmneſs, but wou'd yield
To ſoft perſuaſion; gentle means, my ſon,
Are ever the moſt pow'rful.

GUZ-

GUZMAN.

Muſt I ſooth
The pride of beauty, wear a brow ſerene,
And cover my reſentment, to expoſe
My eaſy heart to new indignities?
I ſhou'd have thought that jealous of my honour
You wou'd approve, and not condemn my rage:
Is it not ſhame enough that I am wedded
To a proud ſlave, who hates me, braves my pow'r,
And owns her heart is given to another?
Whom yet, to make me more accurs'd, I love.

ALVAREZ.

Why bluſh at that? it is a lawful paſſion,
Indulge but keep it within proper bounds,
For all exceſs is guilty—only promiſe
You will determine nothing till I've ſeen her
Once more.

GUZMAN.

A father's will muſt be obey'd;
I will ſuſpend my wrath, but urge me, ſir,
No further.

ALVAREZ.

All I want is time: farewell.

[Exit.

GUZMAN alone.

And have I liv'd to envy Zamor's fate,
To envy a vile ſlave, who ſcarce deſerves
The name of man!—What do I ſee? Alzira!

SCENE II.

GUZMAN, ALZIRA, EMIRA.

ALZIRA.

'Tis I, my lord, 'tis the afflicted wife
Of Guzman; ſhe who honours, who reveres,
And yet has injur'd thee: I come, my lord,
To throw me at your feet, to own my crime,
And beg forgiveneſs: nought have I diſguis'd,
My open heart confeſs'd its fatal paſſion
For the unhappy Zamor; if he dies,
He dies becauſe Alzira was ſincere;
But I ſhall more aſtoniſh thee, I come
To plead for him: I know that Guzman's proud,
Reſentful, and ſevere, and yet I hope
He may be gen'rous, 'tis a conqu'ror's pride,
His glory to forgive: an act like this
Wou'd gain thee more than conqueſt can beſtow,
Win ev'ry heart, perhaps ev'n change Alzira's.
A fawning Spaniard might have promis'd more,
Have ſigh'd, and wept, and ſoften'd thee with tears,
Which I diſdain; the hand of nature form'd
My plain untutor'd heart, if ought can move it,
'Tis generoſity: let Guzman try
If it is made of penetrable mould.

GUS-

GUZMAN.

If you're ſo fond of virtue, 'twould become you
To know and practice it, to ſtudy, madam,
Thoſe manners you condemn, to learn your duty,
To treat yourſelf, your honour, and your fame
With more reſpect; nor dare to name a rival
Whom I abhor, but wait in humble ſilence
Till I determine what ſhall be his fate;
It is enough if I forgive Alzira:
This heart is not inſenſible; but know,
Thoſe who believe ſhall always find me cruel.

SCENE III.

ALZIRA, EMIRA.

EMIRA.

He loves you ſtill, and yet may be perſuaded.

ALZIRA.

Ay, but he's jealous, that deſtroys my Zamor,
I loſt his life by aſking it; but ſay,
Emira, canſt thou ſave him? ſhall he live,
Tho' far from his Alzira? didſt thou try
That ſoldier?

EMIRA.

Yes; the grand corrupter, gold,
Has bought him to our intereſt; he is ready.

ALZIRA.

Thank heav'n, that metal doth not always prove
The inſtrument of ill: but haſte, Emira.

EMIRA.

Is Zamor then devoted to deſtruction?
Cannot Alvarez ſave him? have the council—

ALZIRA.

I have a thouſand fears for him: alas!
Theſe tyrants think the world was made for them,
That they were born the ſov'reigns of mankind,
That Zamor is a rebel and a ſlave:
Barbarians as they are—this cruel council—
But I'll prevent their murth'rous purpoſes:
That ſoldier, my Emira, how he lingers!

EMIRA.

Be not alarm'd; night's friendly ſhade protects him,
And he will ſoon be here with Zamor; ſleep
Hath clos'd the tyrant's eyes, and we are ſafe.

ALZIRA.

O let him lead me to the priſon gate
That I may ſet him free.

EMIRA.

Behold, he comes:
But ſhou'd ye be diſcover'd, foul diſhonour,
Diſgrace, and infamy—

ALZI-

ALZIRA.

Attend on her

Who wou'd betray the man ſhe loves; this ſhame
Thou talk'ſt of is an European phantom,
Which fools miſtake for virtue! 'tis the love
Of glory not of juſtice, not the fear
Of vice but of reproach; a ſhame unknown
In theſe untutor'd climes, where honour ſhines
In its own native light, and ſcorns the aid
Of ſuch falſe luſtre; honour bids me ſave
A lover and a hero thus deſerted.

SCENE IV.

ALZIRA, ZAMOR, EMIRA, a Soldier.

ALZIRA.

O Zamor, all is loſt, thy puniſhment
Already is prepar'd, and thou art doom'd
To inſtant death; loſe not a moment's time,
But haſte away, this ſoldier will conduct thee:
Alas! thou ſee'ſt my grief and my deſpair,
O ſave my huſband from the guilt of murther,
Save thy dear ſelf, and leave me to my fate.

ZAMOZ.

Thou bid'ſt me live, I muſt obey Alzira:
But wilt thou follow the poor friendleſs Zamor?

A desart and this heart are all I now
Have left to offer, once I had a throne.

ALZIRA.

What were a throne and empire without thee?
Alas! my Zamor, to the gloomy desart
My soul shall follow thee; but I am doom'd
To wander here alone, to drag a life
Of bitterness and woe, to spend my hours
In sad reflections on my wretched state,
To be another's, and yet burn for thee:
I bid farewel to Zamor and to joy;
Away, and leave me to my duty; fain
Wou'd I preserve my honour, and my love,
They both are sacred.

ZAMOR.

What's this idol honour,
This European phantom, that deludes thee;
This christian altar, those detested oaths
Extorted from thee, this triumphant God;
What have they done to rob me of Alzira?

ALZIRA.

My sacred promise —

ZAMOR.

'Twas a guilty vow,
And binds thee not; perdition on thy oaths,
And thy false God, whom I abhor! farewel!

ALZI-

ALZIRA.

O ſtop my Zamor.

ZAMOR.

Guzman is thy huſband.

ALZIRA.

Do not upbraid but pity me.

ZAMOR.

O think
On our paſt loves.

ALZIRA.

I think but on thy danger.

ZAMOR.

Thou haſt betray'd me.

ALZIMA.

No; I love thee ſtill:
If 'tis a crime, I own, nay glory in it;
But hence, and leave me here to die alone;
Some dreadful purpoſe labours in thy breaſt:
How thy eyes roll! O Zamor—

ZAMOR.

'Tis reſolv'd.

ALZIRA.

Where art thou going?

ZAMOR.

Glorious liberty,
I'll uſe thee nobly.

ALZIRA.

If thou dy'ſt remember
I periſh with thee.

ZAMOR.

In this hour of terror
Thou talk'ſt to me of love: but time is precious,
Conduct me, ſoldier: fare thee well.

SCENE V.

ALZIRA.

He's gone;
But where I know not: dreadful moment! Guzman,
For thee I quitted Zamor: haſte, Emira,
Follow him, fly, return, and tell me all.
Think'ſt thou that ſoldier will be faithful to us?
[Exit Emira.
I know not why, but ſomething tells me here,
This day, for me, will be a day of horror.
O God of chriſtians, thou all conqu'ring pow'r,
Whom yet I know not, O remove the cloud
From my dark mind; if by my fatal paſſion
I have offended thee, pour all thy vengeance
On me, but ſpare my Zamor; O conduct
His wand'ring footſteps thro' the dreary deſart!
Is Europe only worthy of thy care?
Art thou the partial parent of one world,
And tyrant o'er another? all deſerve
Thy equal love, the victor and the vanquiſh'd
Are all the work of thy creating hand.

But

But hark! what dreadful cry is that? methought
They call'd on Zamor—hark! again that noiſe!
It comes this way: my Zamor's loſt.

SCENE VI.

ALZIRA, EMIRA.

ALZIRA.

Emira,
I'm glad thou'rt come: what haſt thou ſeen, what done,
Where is he? ſpeak, and eaſe my troubled ſoul.

EMIRA.

O it is paſt all hope; he cannot live:
Conducted ſafely by the faithful ſoldier
He paſs'd the guards, then darting from him ruſh'd
Towards the palace; trembling I purſued him,
Amidſt the horrors of the ſilent night,
Almoſt to Guzman's chamber; there he 'ſcap'd me,
Tho' oft I call'd on him, oft look'd in vain:
I heard a dreadful ſhriek, ſome cry'd aloud,
He's dead: the palace is in arms: fly, madam,
And ſave yourſelf.

ALZIRA.

Let us begone, and help
My Zamor.

EMIRA.

What can we do for him?

ALZI-

ALZIRA

Die.

SCENE VII.

ALZIRA, EMIRA, Don ALONZO, Guards.

ALONZO.

I've orders, madam, to ſecure you.

ALZIRA.

Slave,
What mean'ſt thou? where's my Zamor?

ALONZO.

That I know not:
Permit me to conduct you.

ALZIRA.

cruel fate!
I muſt not die then? Zamor is no more,
And yet I live, a captive, and in chains:
O ignominious!—doſt thou weep, barbarian?
I muſt indeed be wretched, if my woes
Can touch a heart like thine; I'll follow thee;
If death awaits me, I obey with pleaſure.

End of the Fourth Act.

ACT

ACT V. SCENE I.

ALZIRA, Guards.

ALZIRA.

PRepares your tortures, you who call yourſelves
The judges of mankind; why am I left
In dread ſuſpenſe, uncertain of my fate?
To live, or die? if I but mention Zamor
The guards around me tremble, and look pale,
His very name affrights them.

SCENE II.

MONTEZUMA, ALZIRA.

ALZIRA.

Ha! my father!

MONTEZUMA.

O my Alzira, what a ſcene of woe
Hath thy imprudent fatal paſſion brought
Amongſt us! we were pleading for thy Zamor,
The good Alvarez had well nigh prevail'd,
When on a ſudden an arm'd ſoldier ruſh'd
With violence in, and bore down all before him;
'Twas Zamor's ſelf; with fury in his aſpect,
And wild diſtraction, on he ſprung to Guzman,
Attack'd, and plung'd the dagger in his breaſt:
The blood that iſſued from your huſband's wound

Guſh'd

Guſh'd on your father: Zamor then reſign'd,
With calm ſubmiſſion at Alvarez' feet
Fell humble; "take," he cry'd, "this guilty ſword,
"Stain'd with thy Guzman's blood, I am reveng'd;
"Now nature calls on thee to do thy duty,
"As I have mine; ſtrike here:" then bar'd his breaſt
To the expected blow: the good Alvarez
Sunk breathleſs in my arms; confuſion follow'd
And cries and horror; Guzman's friends uprais'd him
Bound up his wounds, and try'd by every art
Of med'cine to preſerve his life; the people
Accuſe thee as accomplice in the deed,
And call for juſtice on thee.

ALZIRA.

And coud'ſt thou ——

MONTEZUMA.

O no; my heart ſuſpects thee not, Alzira,
Thy ſoul I know is capable of error,
But not of guilt: alas! thou did'ſt not ſee
The precipiece before thee: Guzman dies
By Zamor's hand, thy huſband by thy lover;
They will condemn thee to a ſhameful death,
But I will try if poſſible to move
The council in thy favour.

ALZIRA.

Do not sue
For me, my father, of these cruel tyrants,
Let but Alvarez live, and love me still,
I ask no more: Guzman's untimely fate
I must lament, because 'twas horrible,
Because, more dreadful still, he had deserv'd it:
Zamor reveng'd his wrongs, I cannot blame
Nor can I praise him for it; he must die;
Alzira wishes but to follow him.

ALVAREZ.

O heav'n, assist me in this work of mercy!

SCENE III.

ALZIRA.

Now end all gracious pow'r, this wretched being!
Alas! Alzira, the new God thou serv'st
Withholds thy hand, and says thou must not finish
Thy hated life; the deities I left
Deny'd me me not the privilege to die.
Is it a crime to hasten on, perhaps,
A few short years, the universal doom
Appointed for us all? and must we drink
The bitter cup of sorrow to the dregs?
In this vile body is there aught so sacred
That the free spirit thou'd not leave at will

Its homely manſion? this all-conqu'ring nation,
Shall they diſpeople earth, deſtroy my race,
Condemn Alzira, and I not be miſtreſs
Of my own life? Barbarians! Zamor then
Muſt die in tortures.

SCENE IV.

ZAMOR in chains, ALZIRA, Guards.

ZAMOR.

Yes, it is decreed;
We both muſt die; beneath the ſpecious name
Of juſtice, the tribunal hath condemn'd us;
Guzman yet lives, my erring hand had left
Its work unfiniſh'd; the barbarian lives
To glut his vengeance with Alzira's blood,
To taſte a tyrant's ſavage joy, and ſee us
Periſh together — to pronounce our doom
Alvarez comes: I am the guilty cauſe;
Thou dy'ſt for me, Alzira.

ALZIRA.

Then no more,
For death is welcome if it comes with Zamor:
O bleſs the happy hour that ſhall diſſolve
My ties to Guzman; I may love thee now
Without a crime, without remorſe, [illegible]

The heart that's due to thee, and thee alone:
Yon dreadful ſcaffold, for our death prepar'd,
Shall be the altar of my love; there, Zamor,
I'll offer up my faith, and expiate there
My crime of infidelity — the worſt
Of all our ſentence is, that it muſt come
From good Alvarez.

ZAMOR.

See, he's here; his cheeks
Are bath'd in tears.

ALZIRA.

Alas! who moſt deſerves
Compaſſion? this will be a dreadful parting.

SCENE V.

ALZIRA, ZAMOR, ALVAREZ, Guards.

ZAMOR.

From you we both expect to hear our fate,
Pronounce it, we are not afraid to die:
Zamor deſerves it, he has ſlain thy ſon,
The ſon of good Alvarez, of my friend;
But what, my lord, has this fair innocent,
What has Alzira done? thou art not cruel,
Proud, and revengeful, like thy countrymen,
Diſtinguiſh'd by thy clemency, we lov'd
Alvarez; wilt thou give up the fair title
Of juſt and good, and bathe thee in the blood
Of innocence?

ALZI-

ALZIRA.

Revenge thyſelf, revenge
Thy ſon; but do not thus condemn the guiltleſs:
I am the wife of Guzman, that alone
Shou'd tell thee, I wou'd ſave, and not betray him,
Ev'n tho' I hated, I reſpected him,
And ſwerv'd not from my faith, thou knowſt I did not:
Careleſs of what the ſland'ring multitude
May think, I reſt my character on thee,
Acquitted by Alvarez, for the reſt
'Tis equal all: if Zamor dies, Alzira
Muſt go with him: I pity thee alone.

ALVAREZ.

Amazing ſcene of tenderneſs and horror!
That he ſhould be the murth'rer of my ſon
Who was my kind deliverer! O Zamor,
To thee I owe a life which I abhor;
It was a fatal gift, and bought too dear:
I am a father, yet I am a man;
Spite of a parent's grief that cries aloud
For vengeance on thee, gratitude pleads ſtrongly;
She will be heard:—and thou who wert my daughter,
Whom yet I call by that dear tender name;
Think not I joy in the inhuman pleaſure
Of fell revenge; I loſe a friend, I loſe

A daughter, and a ſon: the council dooms thee
To death, and bids a wretched father paſs
The cruel ſentence; I cou'd not refuſe
The dreadful taſk, and now am come, my children,
To ſave you both: it is in Zamor's pow'r.

ZAMOR.

To ſave Alzira? ſay, what's to be done?

ALVAREZ.

Believe in him who now inſpires Alvarez;
One word will change your fate: the law decrees,
Whoe'er becomes a chriſtian meets forgiveneſs,
The God of pardon will himſelf o'erſhade
Thy ev'ry crime, and take thee to his mercy;
Spain will protect and love thee as a brother;
Alzira ſhall be ſafe, ye both ſhall live;
I'll anſwer for her life as for thy own;
Zamor, to thee I ſpeak; of thee I aſk
Another life, I owe thee one already;
A father aſks thee only to be happy,
To be a chriſtian, and to ſave Alzira.

ALZIRA.

What ſays my love? ſay, thou'd we purchaſe life
So dearly? Shall I quit my gods for Guzman's,
And be a traitor? tell me, thou ſage tyrant,
When I was maſter of thy fate, wou'dſt thou,

Had

Had Zamor fled, have quitted thy own gods
For mine?

ALVAREZ.

I ſhou'd have done as now I do,
Implor'd th' almighty being to enlighten
A heart like thine, and make thee a true chriſtian.

ZAMOR.

O cruel conteſt! what am I to chooſe,
Or life or death, Alzira, or my gods,
Which muſt I leave? Alzira, 'tis thy cauſe,
Determine it; I think thou wou'dſt not bring
Diſhonour on thy Zamor.

ALZIRA.

Hear me then:
Thou know'ſt that, to obey a father's will,
I gave another what to thee alone
I had devoted; I embrac'd his faith,
And worſhipp'd Montezuma's God; perhaps
It was the error of my eaſy youth,
And thou wilt blame me for it; but methought
The law of chriſtians was the law of truth,
And therefore only did I make it mine
But to renounce thoſe gods our heart adores;
That is no venial error, but a crime
Of deepeſt die; it is to give up both,

The

The God we worſhip, and the God we leave;
'Tis to be falſe to heaven, to the world,
And to ourſelves: no, Zamor, if thou dy'ſt,
Die worthy of Alzira; hear the voice
Of conſcience; act as ſhe alone directs thee.

ZAMOR.

Thou haſt determin'd as I thought thou wou'dſt,
Zamor ſhall die with honour.

ALVAREZ.

Then ye ſcorn
Our proffer'd mercy: hark! thoſe mournful cries—

SCENE VII.

ALVAREZ, GUZMAN, ZAMOR, Americans, Soldiers.

ZAMOR.

O ſave Alzira; let me periſh.

ALZIRA.

No:
I will be join'd to Guzman, and to thee.

ALVAREZ.

My ſon is in the agonies of death;
O Guzman, hear me.

ZAMOR.

Look on Zamor, learn
Of him to die. GUZ-

GUZMAN. [To Zamor.

Perhaps I may teach thee
Another leſſon: I have ow'd the world
A good example long, and now I mean
To pay the debt.
[Turning to Alvarez.
My ſoul is on the wing,
And e'er ſhe takes her flight but waits to ſee
And imitate Alvarez; O my father,
The maſk is off, death has at laſt unveil'd
The hideous ſcene, and ſhew'd me to myſelf;
New light breaks in on my aſtoniſh'd ſoul:
O I have been a proud ungrateful being,
And trampled on my fellow-creatures: heav'n
Avenges earth: my life can ne'er atone
For half the blood I've ſhed: proſperity
Had blinded Guzman, death's benignant hand
Reſtores my ſight; I thank the inſtrument
Employ'd by heav'n to make me what I am,
A penitent: I yet am maſter here;
And yet can pardon: Zamor, I forgive thee,
Live and be free; but O remember how
A chriſtian acted, how a chriſtian dy'd.
[To Montezuma, who kneels to him.
Thou, Montezuma, and ye hapleſs victims
Of my ambition, ſay my clemency

Sur-

Surpaſs'd my guilt, and let your ſov'reigns know,
That we were born your conquerors.

[To Zamor.

Obſerve
The diff'rence, Zamor, 'twixt thy God and mine:
Thine teach thee to revenge an injury,
Mine to forgive and pity thee.

ALVAREZ.

My ſon,
Thy virtue's equal to thy courage,

ALZIRA.

Heav'n!
How wonderful a change! amazing goodneſs!

ZAMOR.

Thou wilt oblige me to repent.

GUZMAN.

Yes, Zamor,
I will do more, thou ſhalt admire and love me:
Guzman too long hath made Alzira wretched,
I'll make her happy; with my dying hand
I give her to thee, live and hate me not,
Reſtore your country's ruin'd walls, and bleſs
My memory.

[To Alvarez.

Alvarez, be once more
A father to them, let the light of heav'n

Shine

Shine forth upon them; Zamor is thy ſon,
Let him repair my loſs.

ZAMOR.

Amaz'd, confounded,
And motionleſs I ſtand; can chriſtians boaſt
Of ſuch exalted virtue: 'twas inſpir'd
By heav'n; the chriſtian's law muſt be divine:
Friendſhip, and faith, and conſtancy I knew
Already; but this ſoars above them all:
I muſt indeed admire and love thee, Guzman
[Falls at his feet.

ALZIRA.

My lord, permit me to embrace thy knees:
O I cou'd die for Guzman; will you then
Forgive my weakneſs?

GUZMAN.

Yes: I pardon all,
I cannot ſee thee weep and not forgive thee.
Come near, my father, take my laſt farewell! [dies.

ALVAREZ. [To Montezuma.

I ſee the hand of God in all our woes,
And humbly bend myſelf before that pow'r
Who wounds to heal, and ſtrikes but to forgive.

END of the SIXTH VOLUME.

JUN 2 1 1962